Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Earthbound

Overview

DEVELOPER

Ape, HAL Laboratory

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

June 5, 1995

Can four average kids save the world from certain destruction at the hands of an evil, alien invader? They might be inexperienced, but don't count them out!

The four spunky kids have the fate of mankind in their hands and the weight of the world on their shoulders, so it's a good thing that they have psychic powers—and you—on their side. As you begin this unique gaming experience and explore the world in search of the sinister spirit of Giygas, pack along our travel guide. You'll need it to find your way through *EarthBound*'s twisted and hilarious world, and you won't want to miss a single side-trip or pass up any sights along the way.

Just remember to phone dear old Mom and Dad—after all, the kids will wander a long way from home.

THE BEST NEWSPAPER IN TWOSON IS

TWOSON TRIBUNE

$1.50 JUNE 6, 199X

MISSING GIRL RESCUED FROM CULT

HAPPY HAPPY VILLAGE HAPPY ONCE MORE

INVENTIVE KIDS

RUNAWAY FIVE TOUR LEAVES TWOSON

MEGACITY LIVIN' FARM

THIS CRAZY OLD GUY WILL LET YOU STAY FREE!

WINDFALL

EarthBound's cartoonish exterior and quirky humor belie an undercurrent of intensely dark themes. The series' Japanese title, *Mother*, was inspired partially by creator Shigesato Itoi's melancholy upbringing. Mr. Itoi's parents were largely absent and he was instead raised by his grandmother. In *EarthBound*, the main character's father is never shown, only connecting briefly to his son through phone calls and monetary deposits in a bank account. Ness, the hero's name by default, lives in a home with his mother, who cares for him very much and provides a safe-haven throughout the game. In addition to its personal significance, the name "Mother" is also derived from the word, "mothership," as well as the 1970 song of the same name by John Lennon, which shares similar themes of abandonment.

> **"I wanted to make a video game that didn't just reek of—well, video games."**

Mr. Itoi's life experiences influence the entirety of the game. Sometimes it's a nod to his favorites songs or rock bands, a reaction to police brutality, or satirizing a real-life cult who, at the time of development, was responsible for several deadly terrorist attacks throughout Japan. In the case of the game's terrifying final battle, Mr. Itoi drew from a deeply traumatic childhood event where he accidentally viewed a film titled *The Military Policeman and the Dismembered Beauty*.

Yet the game is more than the result of emotional scarring and painful ordeals; most of *EarthBound* comes across as whimsical and borderline cheerful, even as the world's fate lies in uncertainty. It's this unconventional dichotomy that makes *EarthBound* such a memorable experience.

Mr. Itoi wanted to subvert the trope of repetitive NPC dialogue found in most RPGs. During *Earthbound*'s five-year development cycle, Mr. Itoi was unfamiliar with computers. He wrote every line of dialogue in the game by dictating to a typist, and would judge their reactions to determine whether or not the lines would have the intended effect.

Ness

Following in the footsteps of Mother's Ninten, *Earthbound*'s curiously named young protagonist is proficient in Psionic (PSI) powers, the game's alternative to the typical magic spells found in most RPGs. Some fans have speculated that Ninten is actually Ness' father, while Mr. Itoi has said that players can choose to name Ness Ninten and treat them as the same character if they'd like, though *Earthbound*'s story doesn't properly support this.

Ness' adventure is kicked off by a meteorite crashing near his home. Upon investigating the crash site, Ness meets an alien bee from the future who foretells Ness' destiny to save the world.

Ness' signature weapon is a baseball bat, but he can also wield other toy-inspired armaments such as yo-yos and slingshots. If Ness goes too long without visiting or calling his mother, he is afflicted by the "homesick" status. While homesick, Ness loses focus during combat and misses his turns.

The nationality of Ness is not dictated by the developers. Mr. Itoi expected that American audiences would see him as American, and Japanese audiences would see him as Japanese, noting that ultimately, "It doesn't matter."

Paula Polestar

Quite similar to Zelda in *A Link to the Past*, Paula first contacts Ness telepathically as he sleeps. As was the case with Zelda, Paula has been imprisoned by cultists and must be rescued.

Once freed from her captors, Paula becomes the second party member. Her default weapon is a frying pan, the same as her Mother counterpart, Ana. However, of the Chosen Four (Ness, Paula, Jeff, and Poo), she has the most powerful arsenal of offensive PSI powers.

During the Western localization process, Paula's personality was shifted from being demure and weak to much more capable and independent.

Jeff Andonuts

Jeff is the game's third party member and the only non-PSI user. Instead, Jeff uses his IQ stat to repair powerful equipment. The higher his IQ, the more he can repair and equip. In combat, Jeff uses various guns such as the Death Ray, Pop Gun, and Baddest Beam.

While Ness and Paula become close friends throughout the game, Ness and Jeff have very few meaningful interactions.

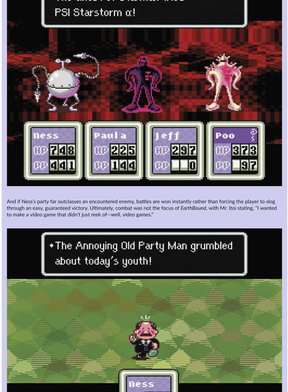
Poo

For *Earthbound*, the development team wanted to infuse a sense of internationalism, more so than the previous game. Poo, the fourth and final party member, is a clear example of this philosophy. While Ness's nationality is left ambiguous, Poo has several distinct Eastern characteristics. His martial arts training requires a special diet wherein eating Western food has a reduced restorative effect, but Eastern foods are more potent to Poo than the rest of the party.

Poo uses his physical strength in combat, along with a mix of offensive and defensive PSI powers. Of note, Poo has an exclusive power called Mirror, which allows him to take the form of non-boss enemies and use their unique abilities.

Mr. Saturn

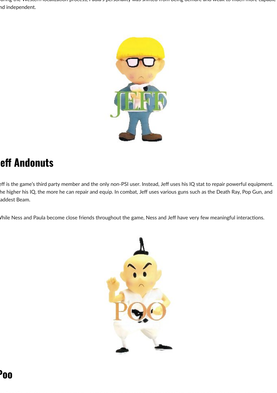
Even more so than Ness, Mr. Saturn is arguably *Earthbound*'s most recognizable figure, acting as a mascot of sorts for the entire Mother/*Earthbound* trilogy. These strange, whiskered-nose creatures populate Saturn Valley and are meant to symbolize innocence. Their language in the Japanese version was written by Mr. Itoi himself and was inspired by his young daughter's handwriting. In the Western versions, Mr. Saturns speak in an equally strange font, mixed with nonsensical words such as "boing" and "sling."



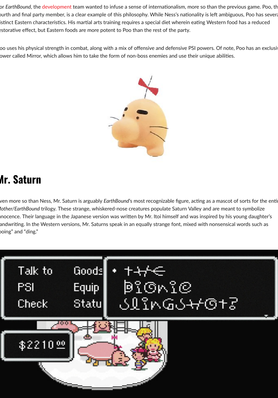
COMBAT

Earthbound features many staples of traditional role-playing games, such as turn-based combat and magic spells (PSI powers that use PP, or Psychic Points). Unlike other RPGs (including Mother), however, *Earthbound* does not have random encounters. Instead, enemies are visible as Ness and his party move around the world. Coming into contact with an enemy triggers a battle sequence, and enemies or the player can gain an immediate advantage by initiating battle from behind. Mr. Itoi purposely simplified the combat and equipment in *Earthbound* to fit his personal tastes, including an "Auto" option where the AI controls the player's party.

Yet, one unconventional mechanic sets the game apart, even from modern RPGs—the rolling health system. When Ness and friends take damage, their HP (Hit Points) tick down on an odometer-esque display. It was designed to be "subconsciously entertaining," similar to the way that a drum roll builds suspense. Because the player's HP isn't immediately depleted, it's possible to heal or win battles even after taking fatal damage.



And if Ness's party far outclasses an encountered enemy, battles are won instantly rather than forcing the player to slog through an easy, guaranteed victory. Ultimately, combat was not the focus of *Earthbound*, with Mr. Itoi stating, "I wanted to make a video game that didn't just reek of—well, video games."

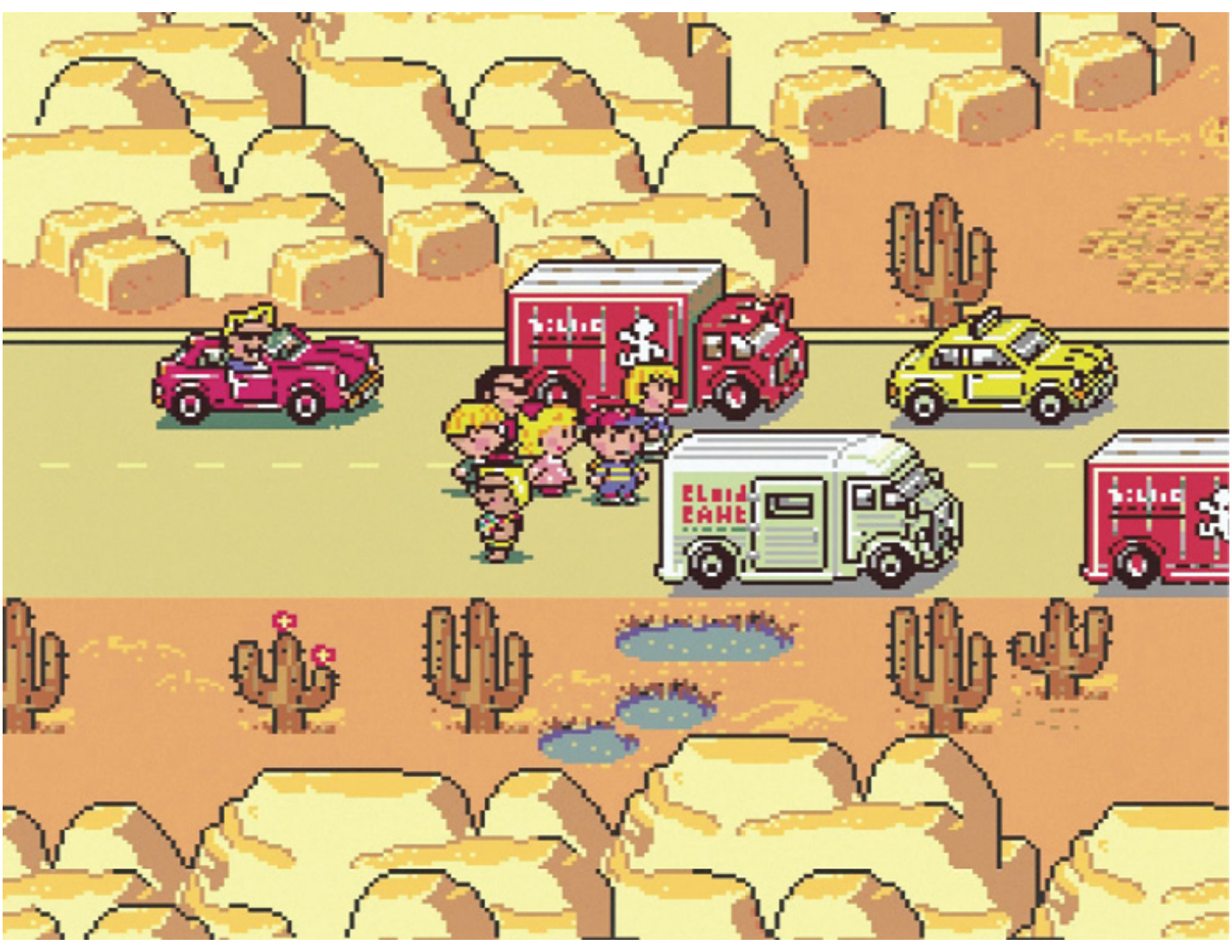


Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Earthbound

Say “Fuzzy Localization!”

Nintendo of America’s localization team was given enormous freedom during the game’s conversion process. *Mother 2*’s journey to becoming *EarthBound*, primarily handled by Marcus Lindblom, is such an intensive and winding tale that it has been covered comprehensively in dedicated websites, online videos, and 400-page books!



The most popular quote from *EarthBound*, “Say fuzzy pickles!” (created by Dan Owsen) was originally, “Say cheese sandwich!” This is an example of Japanese colloquialisms that don’t translate accurately across oceans. In this case, the localization team opted to go weirder and funnier, which was often the case. In *Mother 2*, a man explains that his wife had run away from home twice and that he had no luck. In *EarthBound*, the same man says his wife has run away twice, and that he’s very lucky!

Mother 2 featured a staggering amount of Western pop culture references, some of which were removed, while others were added in *EarthBound*. Nods to the Blues Brothers, Superman, the Grateful Dead, and Coca-Cola were changed or suppressed to prevent potential legal issues in the States. Likewise, due to Nintendo of America’s policies on certain content, almost all instances or references to religion, death, crosses, alcohol, child discipline/abuse, and nudity were altered.

As a nod to the game’s original title, *EarthBound* often uses the word “mother” in place of “mom.”

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Earthbound

Places of Interest

One of *EarthBound*'s most striking differences from other RPGs is that it heavily features modern-day locations. The game features various regions: Eagleland is both a satirical and romanticized view of America; FoggyLand is more European in nature; and Chommo is inspired by Asia and Africa. While *EarthBound* aimed for a more international feel and never canonically ties any of its regions to their real-world counterparts, *Mother*'s opening scene explicitly states the game takes place in America.

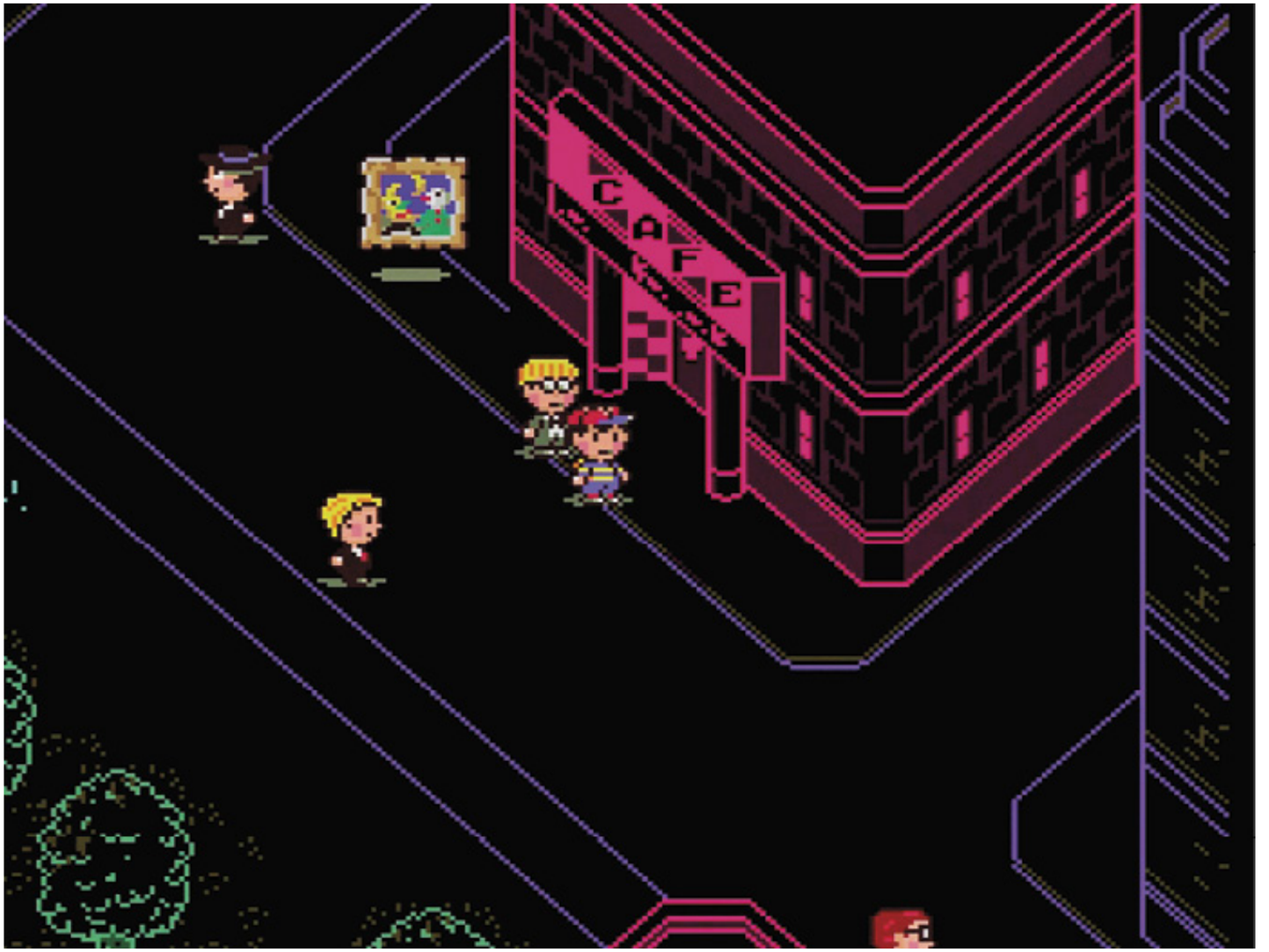
Each town is designed to be distinct, with earlier destinations feeling "closer to actual society" before reaching more fantastical areas where the threat of Giygas is more pronounced.

Onett

EarthBound's starting area is called Onett. Ness's home is nestled away in the idealistic suburbs just outside of town, similar to the town of Podunk in the original *Mother*. The first several subsequent areas are all named after the order in which the player visits them: Twoson, Threed, etc.

Moonside

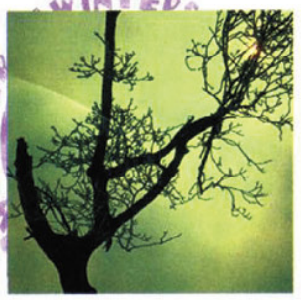
Moonside is an inversed illusion of the game's fourth town, Fourside, created by an evil statue. The town's visuals are heavily distorted, as is the dialogue spoken by the townsfolk. The black streets and neon-outlined buildings are reminiscent of the graphics from early console games.


C A F E

Talk to
Goods
PSI
Equip
Check
Statu
•Welcome to Moonside.
•Wel come to moo nsi ns
dem oons ide.
C A F E

Winters

The snow-covered land of Winters provides a stark contrast to other locations untouched by the elements. The Sky Runner machine, which resembles a UFO, is introduced here and is used by Jeff to quickly travel to Threed to rescue his fellow party members. Another method of transportation can be found in Winters in the form of Tessie, a mythical sea creature who lives in a lake.



Map Key

- A Snow Wood Boarding School
- B Drugstore
- C Tea Tent
- D Phone Tent
- E Stew Tent

Winters

Travelers in Winters shouldn't expect the luxury accommodations found in other destinations. Apart from the Snow Wood Boarding School, the only other signs of civilization in this forest maze are to be found in crude tents.

TELEPATHIC DREAMING

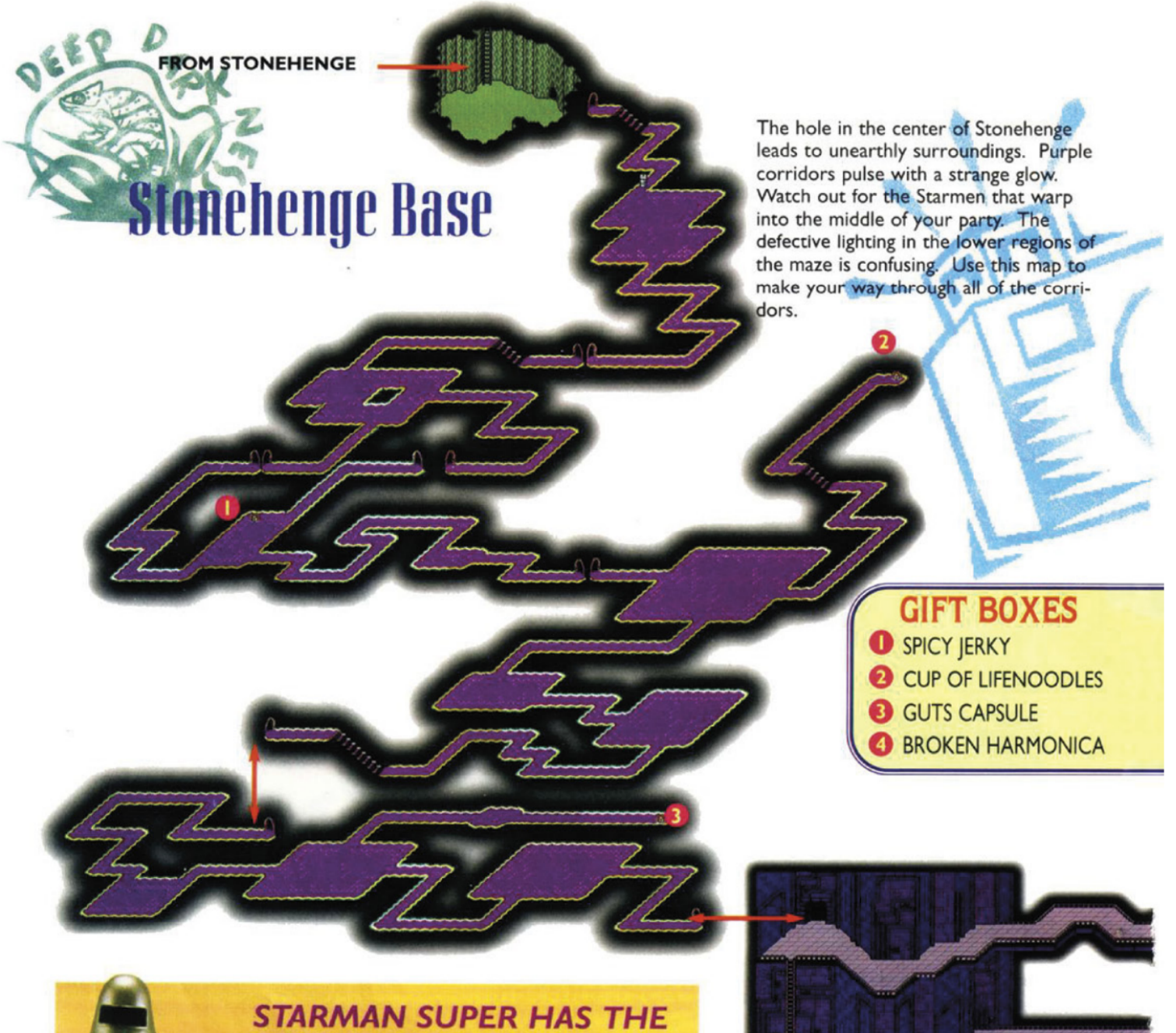
While sleeping in the dorm at the Snow Wood Boarding School, Jeff Andonuts receives a wake-up call from Paula. Unlike most long distance calls received at the school, this call is transmitted telepathically. Jeff accepts the message at face value and begins his southward journey to rescue Paula and Ness.

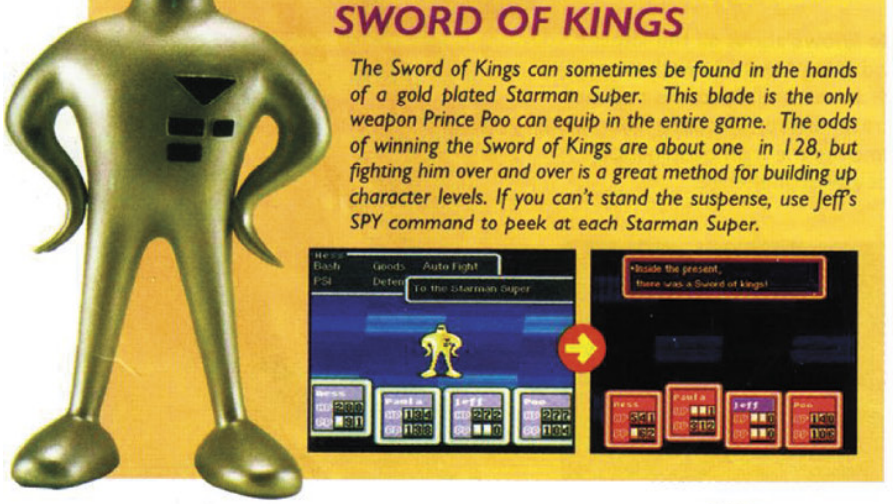
Snow Wood Drugstore

- •T-Rex Bat ----------$698
- •Non-stick Fry Pan --$1,490
- •Coin of Silence ----$2,500
- •Picnic Lunch ----------$24
- •Skip Sandwich DX ----$98
- •Lucky Sandwich ----$128
- •Coffee ----------$6

Stonehenge

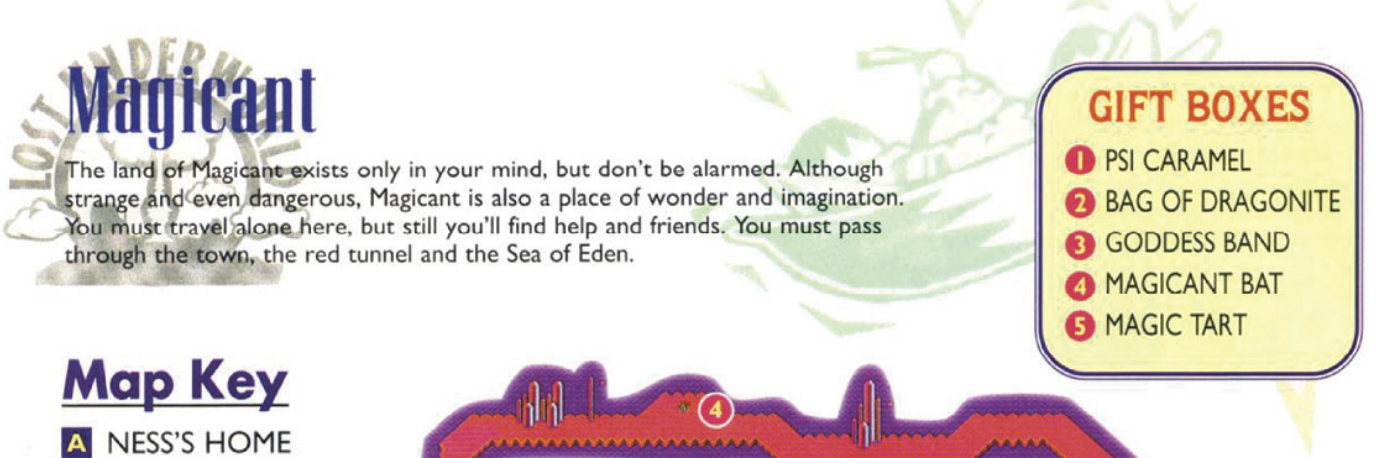
The Stonehenge Base lies underneath this wonder of the world, and is filled with the series' prevalent enemy, the Starmen. The Stonehenge Base is home to the Starman Supers, which have a 1 in 128 chance of dropping Poo's ultra-rare Sword of Kings weapon.

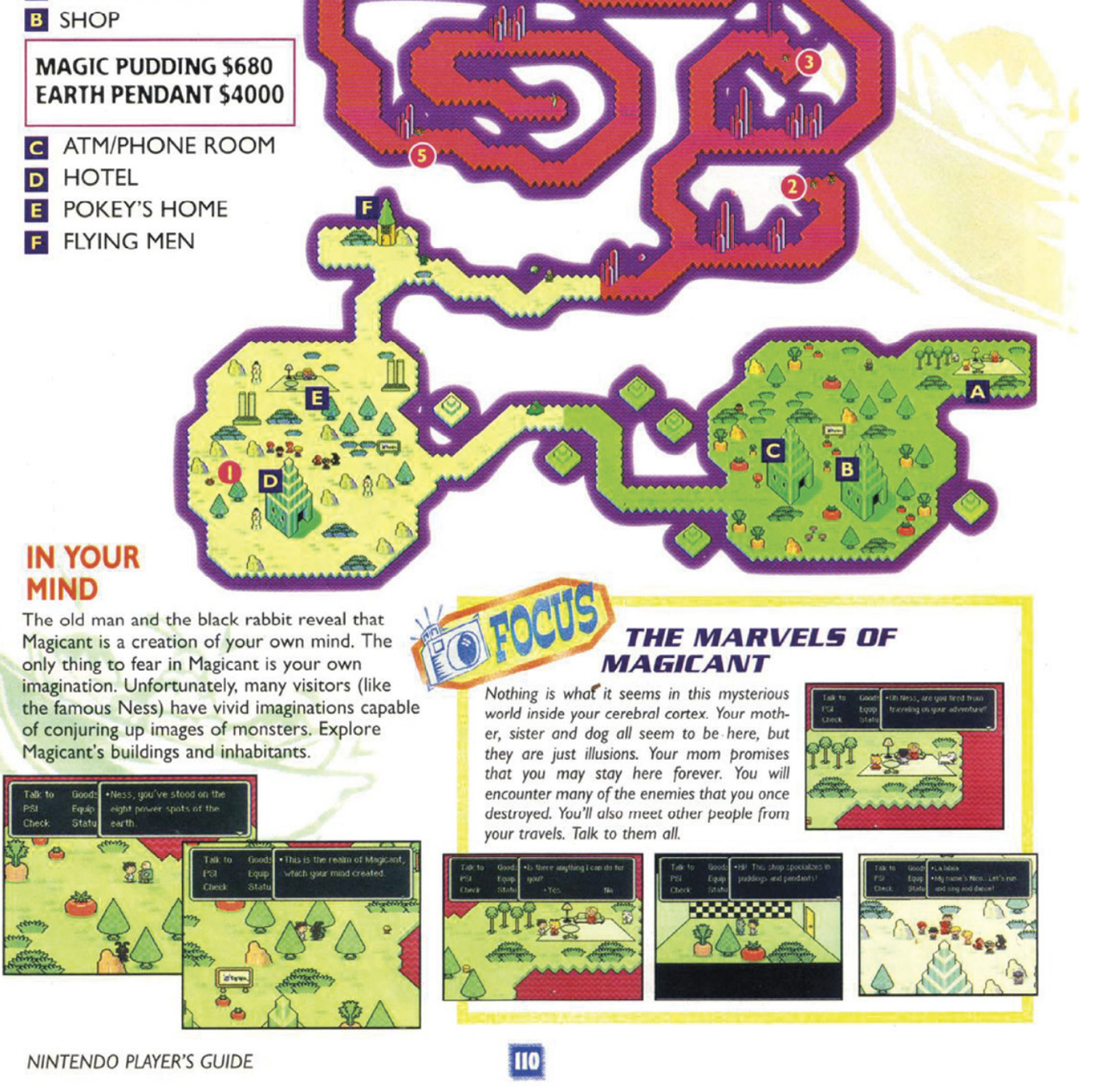




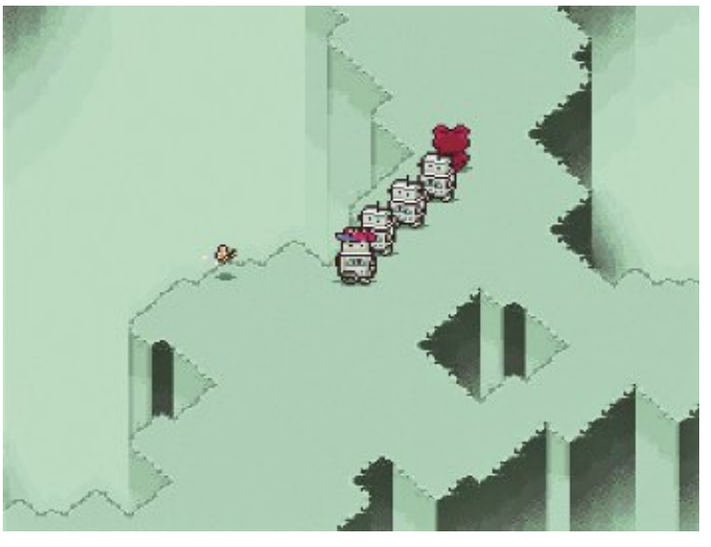
Magicant

After gathering the power necessary to defeat Gigyas from around the world, Ness enters his mind in order to face his own subconscious evil. Here he encounters memories of friends, family members, enemies, and even his former selves. In *Mother 2*, Ness ventured into Magicant naked, as nudity is a sign of purity in Japan. For the Western release, Ness appears in his pajamas.





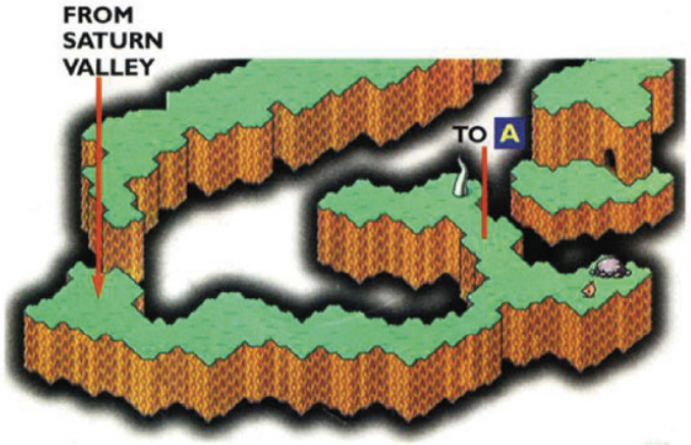
The Cave of the Past



In order to confront the time-traveling Gigyas, the party transfers their souls into robotic bodies and journeys to the past via a Mr. Saturn-shaped device. Even as the game reaches the “point of no return” (a common event in RPGs where backtracking is no longer possible), it still has exciting—and terrifying—surprises in store for the player.

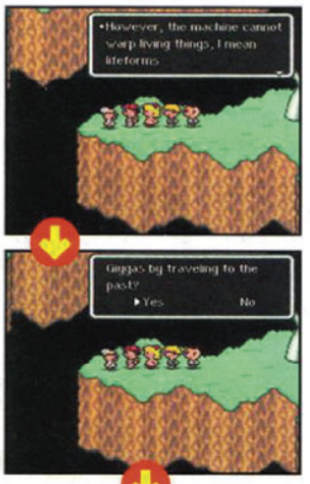
The First Step Back

The trip from Saturn Valley doesn't take your gallant crew all the way back to Giygas. In fact, the first leg of your journey deposits you in a tunnel with a wrecked Phase Distorter and no way out. Fortunately, Dr. Andonuts will show up with a new and improved machine to carry you back into the recesses of time.



I ROBOT

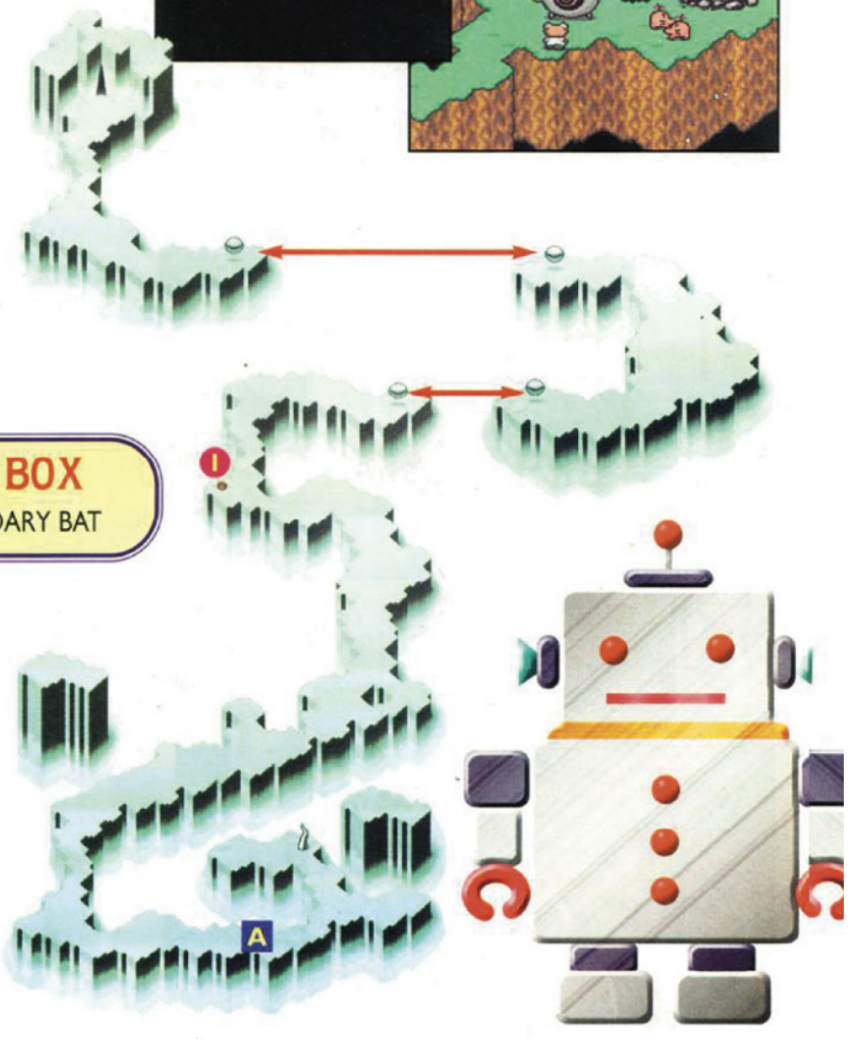
After walking around the tunnel for a short time, Dr. Andonuts will appear, apologizing for the failure of the Phase Distorter. He also shares some bad news with you. The Phase Distorter III destroys life forms that pass through it. The only way to go back in time, it turns out, is to be converted into robots, which can pass safely through the mists of time. Dr. Andonuts will perform the robotomy when you're ready.



A GIFT FOR POO

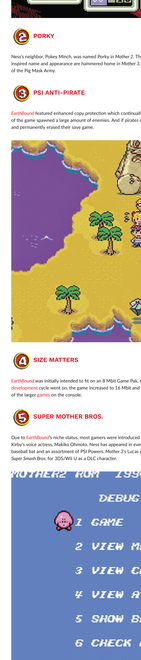
The first character you encounter in this middle world between the present and the past is an old monk who carries a gift for Prince Poo. The monk bestows the knowledge of PSI Starstorm, Omega level, on the Prince. This ultimate psychic power will work wonders against the fierce attacks that lie ahead (or behind) in the cave of the past.

GIFT BOX
❶ LEGENDARY BAT



1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

Unlike most Super Famicom games, *Mother 2* was encased in an all-red box with its logo in large print. For *Earthbound*'s art, a golden Starman Deluxe stands in front of the psychedelic combat background and Ness can be seen in the reflection of his visor. *Earthbound* also included a full-sized Player's Guide.

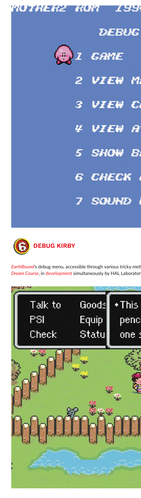


2 PORKY

Ness's neighbor, Pokey Minch, was named Porky in *Mother 2*. The name "Pokey" was a mistranslation, and Porky's swine-inspired name and appearance are hammered home in *Mother 3*, where he becomes known as King Porky the Pig King, leader of the Pig Mask Army.

3 PSI ANTI-PIRATE

Earthbound featured enhanced copy protection which continually ran checks on the legitimacy of the Game Pak. Pirated copies of the game spawned a large amount of enemies. And if pirates could somehow manage to reach the final boss, the game froze and permanently erased their save game.

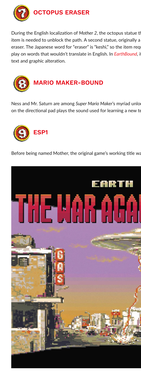


4 SIZE MATTERS

Earthbound was initially intended to fit on an 8 Mbit Game Pak, the standard size for Super NES games. As the five-year development cycle went on, the game increased to 16 Mbit and eventually 24 Mbit, tripling its original size and making it one of the larger games on the console.

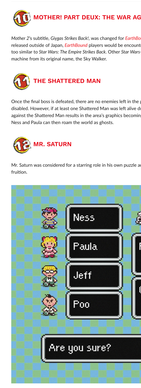
5 SUPER MOTHER BROS.

Due to *Earthbound*'s niche status, most gamers were introduced to Ness in the *Super Smash Bros.* series, where he is voiced by Kirby's voice actress, Makiko Ohmoto. Ness has appeared in every *Super Smash Bros.* game to date, armed with his trusty baseball bat and an assortment of PSI Powers. *Mother 3*'s Lucas joined the series in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*, and returned in *Super Smash Bros. for 3DS/Wii U* as a DLC character.



6 DEBUG KIRBY

Earthbound's debug menu, accessible through various tricky methods, uses Kirbs as a cursor. Likewise, *Earthbound* and *Kirby's Dream Course*, in development simultaneously by HAL Laboratory, share a number of sound effects.



7 OCTOPUS ERASER

During the English localization of *Mother 2*, the octopus statue that blocked Ness's way was changed to pencil. A pencil eraser item is needed to unblock the path. A second statue, originally a limbless Japanese statue called a "kokeshi," was changed to an eraser. The Japanese word for "eraser" is "keshi," so the item required to remove the second statue, the kokeshi keshi, was a play on words that wouldn't translate in English. In *Earthbound*, it's called the "eraser eraser," preserving the joke with a minor text and graphic alteration.

8 MARIO MAKER-BOUND

Ness and Mr. Saturn are among Super Mario Maker's myriad unlockable costumes. While using the Ness costume, pressing up on the directional pad plays the sound used for learning a new technique in *Earthbound*.

9 ESP!

Before being named Mother, the original game's working title was ESP!.

10 MOTHER! PART DEUX: THE WAR AGAINST GIYGAS STRIKES BACK!

Mother 2's subtitle, *Giygas Strikes Back!*, was changed for *Earthbound* to *The War Against Giygas!* Since *Mother* hadn't been released outside of Japan, *Earthbound* players would be encountering Giygas for the first time. The *Mother 2* subtitle was also too similar to *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*. Other *Star Wars*-related changes included changing the flying Sky Runner machine from its original name, the Sky Walker.

11 THE SHATTERED MAN

Once the final boss is defeated, there are no enemies left in the game and all other methods of defeating the party are disabled. However, if at least one Shattered Man was left alive during the playthrough, he will still be there. Losing the fight against the Shattered Man results in the area's graphics becoming temporarily glitched, but this resets after exiting the building. Ness and Paula can then roam the world as ghosts.

12 MR. SATURN

Mr. Saturn was considered for a starring role in his own puzzle action game at one point, but the project never came to fruition.

13 DEFAULT NAMES

In *Mother 2*, default names suggested for each character include the names of characters from not only Super Mario Bros., but also SNAM, an insanely popular Japanese boy band at the time. One of the members of SNAP appeared in the commercials for *Mother 2*.

14 OFFICIAL SOUNDTRACK

In Japan, *Mother 2*'s soundtrack was released in November 1994. The tracklist includes 21 songs from the game, and three remixes. Due to the various popular songs the *Mother 2* soundtrack references, it was never officially released outside of Japan.

15 BEATLE MANIA

Of all the musicians paid homage to by the game, nods to The Beatles are the most prevalent. The names of the band members are among the default character names at the start of *Mother 2* and a grounded submarine can be found in Souther Scaraba. Its yellow color is said to be "purely coincidental."

16 THE MANY TALENTS OF SHIGESATO ITOI

Mother/*Earthbound* creator Shigesato Itoi became a celebrity in the 1980s due to coining extremely popular phrases for various advertisements. In 1988, Mr. Itoi voiced the father of the main characters in the award-winning Studio Ghibli film, *My Neighbor Totoro*. In 1997, after the development of the first two *Mother* games and release of a self-titled bass fishing game, Mr. Itoi began a website titled *Almost Daily Itoi News*, which has been updated every day since its inception. He has written several short-stories and returned to Nintendo for various interviews and retrospectives on the *Mother* series.

In 2011, Mr. Itoi released a smartphone app designed to help people quit smoking, which he himself had done in 2002. His next app, released in 2016, was designed specifically for pet photography and has been described as "Instagram for adorable animals."

Earthbound
Confidential Information

Video is restricted

Speedrunner Aurilliux

Speedrunning Highlight: Beating *EarthBound* live in front of 100,000+ viewers

So you've decided to speedrun a 30-hour game, huh? *EarthBound* runs are filled with potential time-saving exploits as well as potential end-running catastrophes. Sometimes the difference between ants and slugs can determine whether a speedrun's worth continuing, and that's just within the first few minutes of the game.

Aurilliux's current best times are 4h 03m 39s for Any% Glitchless, and 1h 09m 20s for Any%. He doesn't currently hold the world record, but he does know the game inside and out, and demonstrated his thorough mastery over every inch of Eagleland (and beyond) for over 100,000 livestream viewers during a 2016 charity marathon.

The road to competitive speedrunning wasn't easy, but it didn't hurt that *EarthBound* was a childhood favorite of Aurilliux's. "My initial runs for *EarthBound* were quite long! I had played the game many times for fun, and figured I could probably play through the game in one go. I did a few searches online, found an old set of notes, and did my first glitchless run. It took nearly seven hours for me to finish, with quite a few deaths along the way!"

"For new runners, it can be very discouraging to have your entire party die," says Aurilliux. "I've seen many runners reset because their party died, even though they easily could've still gotten a Personal Best (PB) time. Just make safety saves throughout the run to help mitigate your mistakes. For experienced runners, the Onett section of the game is extremely execution-heavy due to luck manipulation, or 'RNG manipulation'. Resets are common in the early game. Due to this luck manipulation route, Ness is extremely under-leveled for the following sections, making those riskier as well." Speedruns make heavy use of the game's rolling HP meter, which, in the right hands, allows for Ness to defeat bosses and reach areas that would otherwise be impossible early on.

Aurilliux shares his best tips in the following pages, as well as some additional advice for would-be runners: "Speedrunning a game for the first time can be a fun (and sometimes frustrating) experience! Some streamers choose to do their first speedrun of a game "blind", meaning they choose to do no research whatsoever. This is often amusing to viewers, but is the hardest (and potentially the most frustrating) way to get into a new speedrun."

"When learning a speedrun, don't be afraid to dig around and ask questions," Aurilliux says. "Watch other speedruns for the game. Ask questions of the runners (most are quite responsive to questions regarding their runs). Some communities have put together guides to help new runners learn the basics of their games, be sure to ask around and see if your game of interest already has an existing guide. It's very easy to settle into believing that the current route is the fastest, but small optimizations here and there throughout a long run will make a big difference in total time saved. Speaking to individual runs and improving times, no one has ever had a "perfect" run where luck has made everything go as fast as possible, so that allure to grind runs for better luck always exists. Menus are an oft-overlooked place to save time. Each menu optimization may only save a few frames, but a lot of time is spent in menus in *EarthBound*, and again, those frames add up quickly. Knowing exactly where items are in your inventory (as to avoid spending precious seconds searching for them) is important for the fastest times!"

Basic

Despawning Enemies

EarthBound only keeps a small number of sprites in memory at a time. Only the enemies on-screen, and those just barely off-screen, remain loaded in memory. The game randomly determines whether enemies should be spawned each time a new area is loaded into memory. By walking back and forth, and unloading and reloading an area, enemies can be removed from most areas of the game. Some areas are harder to despawn than others, due to their location, or due to the probability of enemies being generated. Very few areas have a 100% enemy spawn rate, though, so look to get rid of these random enemy encounters whenever possible. Every battle avoided is typically between 15s saved (in the event that you get lucky and run away immediately) to upwards of multiple minutes for some particularly nasty fights. Each extra fight is also a strain on your limited resources (HP, PP), so the chance of death rises with each additional extra fight. Don't get into extra fights if you can help it!

Terrain Use

Enemies in *EarthBound* generally move predictably. Keeping that in mind, it can be easy to get enemies caught on trees, walls, presents, sprites, and anything else that blocks movement. This saves even more time than despawning enemies, if you can manage it! There are many places throughout a run that this can be done, but one of the most common is to have enemies that swing side-to-side, such as crows or UFOs, caught on a wall. Since they have to swing away from you in order to approach you, they'll be stuck on the wall and unable to reach you.

Item Duplication

This is considered a glitch. Due to a quirk in the game's programming, it's very easy to duplicate food items. Buy one (or more) condiment item(s) (salt packet, ketchup packet, etc.). These can be found in Burglin Park in Twoson at the earliest. Acquire the item you'd like to duplicate. (Rock Candy can boost your party's stats to very high levels, but takes too long for speedrunning. Brain Food Lunch is an excellent healing item, and can be duplicated. BFL duping was used in the older any% routes, pre-luck manipulation.) Make sure that the condiment item is "above" the item you'd like to duplicate in your inventory. Then, use the item you want to duplicate while in battle. The condiment will be consumed, but the item to be duplicated will be untouched.

Out of Bounds – The Easy Way

This is *definitely* considered a glitch. This exploits another quirk in the game's programming, this time regarding how stairs work. Walking on stairs puts your party into a special movement routine, and escaping this routine in a way the programmers didn't account for results in some unexpected behavior. The easiest way to exploit this is by getting your party killed while on stairs.

There's no way to fight enemies while standing on stairs, though, so we have to be a bit clever.

Get all but one member of your party killed. Get the final party member afflicted with a status effect that deals damage over time (cold from zombies in Threed or a UFO in Peaceful Rest Valley, poison from enemies in Dusty Dunes Desert or a zombie dog, and sunstroke from wandering the desert are all good options). Save the game. Walk onto a set of stairs, and stay on them (prison in Threed is the earliest available set, but there are some easily accessible ones in Summers). Allow your last party member to run out of HP. At the death prompt, say "No", then "Yes", to go back to the file select menu without resetting. (For the first prompt, you can just press B. For the second prompt, you have to actually arrow over to the Yes option, you cannot just press A or L.) Next, load a save.

You can now move around the map while ignoring walls and sprites! You can end this by touching a door. You can load other areas of the map by using either the Town Map, if the area is within a town, or by using the Sound Stone, as long as you still have it. Move into a dark area, and use the Town Map or Sound Stone to load that area. The game's entire map is laid out on one gigantic map, so you can get from one place to anywhere else, as long as there is a door to touch. Just remember that you can't go out of bounds again once you've hit a door. You can also make a copy of the save you made earlier, and copy it into a new file. Use that file to have your party die on the stairs, and load another file, to keep going out of bounds!

Advanced

Stutter-stepping

Enemies in *EarthBound* have different movement patterns. In this case, it's possible to exploit enemies that only move when the party moves. By tapping the directional pad, it's possible to move small distances without these enemies moving at all.

Experiment with the timing, but approximately six to eight taps per second is optimal for trying to skirt past these kinds of enemies. This skill is useful in the Giant Step cave to avoid antoids and rats, and very useful in the Mole Cave to avoid snakes and ants—it's hard to despawn the enemies there but easy to stutter past them.

Out of Bounds – The Fast Way

This trick requires opening a text box while getting onto a set of stairs. However, the game blocks your controller input during the window of time where the party is walking onto the stairs. So, this requires a way for the game to decide to open its own text box, while the party walks onto stairs. Calling for Escargo Express, or ordering a pizza, and then going to someplace where the delivery guy cannot reach you, is one way to get a text box to pop up. However, it's difficult to time those boxes properly. The most reliable way to get a text box is to use the low health prompt, when one of your party members has a status effect that deals damage over time, and their health is getting low.

This glitch often goes hand-in-hand with luck manipulation, but one area doesn't require luck manipulation to execute this glitch reliably. In Summers, save in the Museum with (at least) one of your party members having a damage-dealing status effect, and low HP. Save as far right as possible when looking at the phone; the game saves your exact location when making a save, so this is important. When reloading the save, immediately walk out and down onto the stairs. It's a very tight window, but it's possible for the text box to appear right as you begin walking onto the stairs.

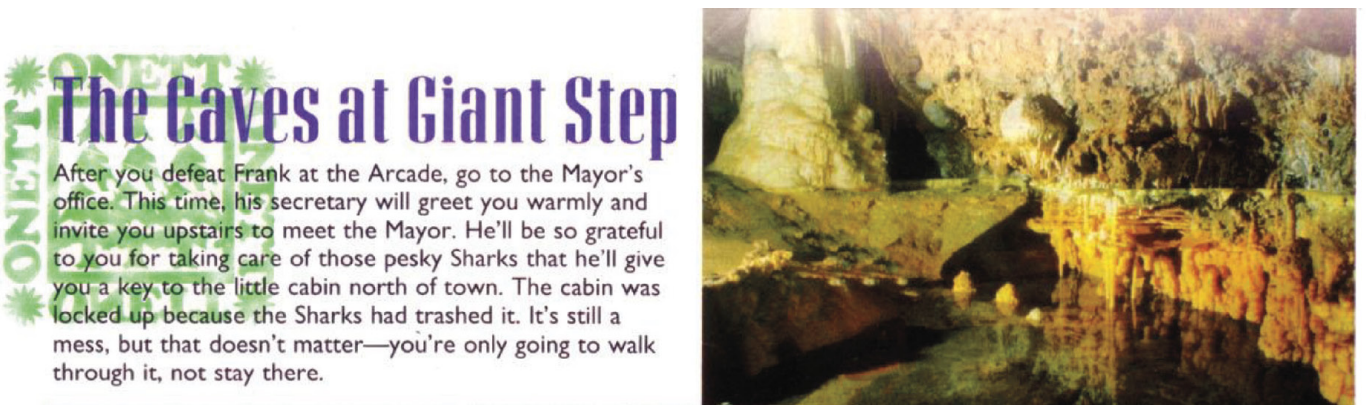
If done correctly, you'll be able to walk out of bounds! In this case, however, there is one additional quirk that does not occur in the easier version of this glitch. There is an invisible horizontal line drawn by the top of the stairs (or bottom, depending on where you entered). If you pass this line in any way (by simply walking through it, or entering a door that places you above it on the world map), you are teleported back onto the stairs, and the glitch ends.

Expert

Luck or "RNG" Manipulation

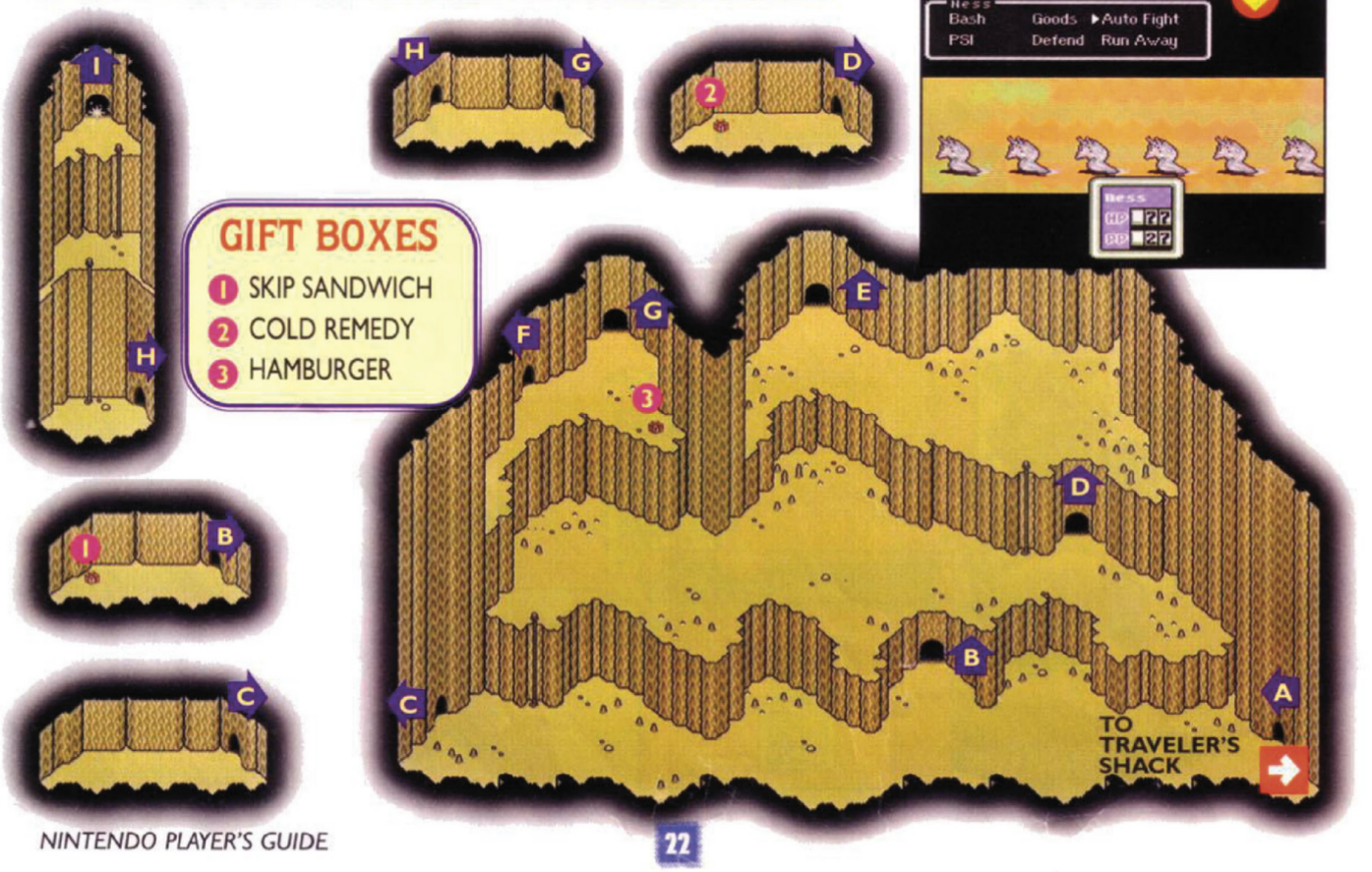
EarthBound generates “random” numbers to determine what should happen in combat, how NPCs should randomly walk around the map, whether items drop in combat, and anything else that has a “chance” to happen. However, the random number generator (RNG) can be abused. The game always begins in the same state at power on; if the inputs provided to the game from power on are always the same, then the same output is achieved. There is a small amount of leniency, thankfully. Inputs do not always need to be identical down to the individual frames, but successful luck manipulation takes a lot of practice.

Current *EarthBound* glitchless routes do luck manipulation through all of Onett, and current any% routes do luck manipulation for most of the game. Thankfully, it’s not terribly difficult to watch a runner’s route and duplicate it, with enough practice. Just remember that if there are NPCs on screen, you cannot delay with regards to your inputs; and conversely, if no one’s HP is rolling down during combat, you can take all the time you need to do your inputs correctly.



BUGS 'N' SLUGS

Watch out for tiny enemies inside the caves. Even though they're so little you can hardly see them, they attack fiercely. Well, the slugs might not be fierce, but they're a pain because they attack in numbers. The Black Antoids are fast and nasty.



GIFT BOXES

1. SKIP SANDWICH
2. COLD REMEDY
3. HAMBURGER

Natural Culture Museum

Step back in time to study ancient artifacts that are part of Scaraba's cultural history. Now open are exhibits of rare and fragile relics that tell us how the ancient Scarabans lived. Hours: 8 a.m.- 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. through 4 p.m. Saturday.

No. 120315
Cultural Museum

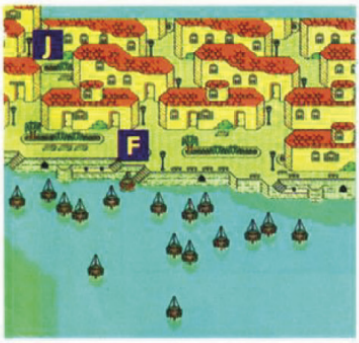
TRAVEL STEPS

If you follow these steps, you should see all of the sights in this region and do everything necessary to move on.

Get Stoic Club Phone Number

Call for Reservation

Talk to Woman at Stoic Club

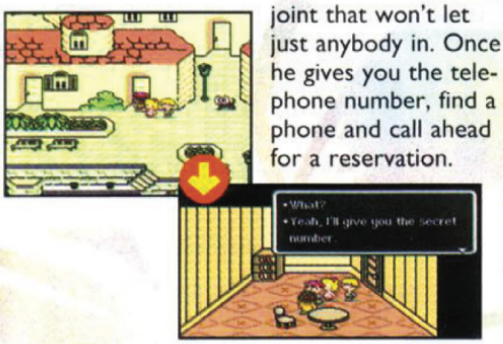


GO TO THE PORT OF TOTO

When you explore the port village of Toto, to the east, you'll meet a Captain who tells you about his wife, who makes Magic Cake. She hasn't been doing much baking lately, though—she's been hanging out at the Stoic Club, and the Captain is none too happy about that.

GET A LINE TO THE CLUB

In one of the houses near the Captain's dock you'll find a man who knows the number to the Stoic Club. It's an exclusive joint that won't let just anybody in. Once he gives you the telephone number, find a phone and call ahead for a reservation.



GET MAGIC CAKE

When you have a reservation, you can enter the club and talk to the patrons, who are all pondering important issues. One man will point out the Captain's wife. Go talk to her to see if she'll give you some of her Magic Cake.

USE THE PHONE AT THE STORE

Also near the Captain's dock is a store that sells supplies that are much less fancy than the ones in Summers' Grocery Store. Use the telephone there to call the Stoic Club. Make your reservation, then head back down the street to the club.

- Get Magic Cake
- Eat Magic Cake
- Go to Dalaam
- Complete Exercise
- Ask The Master about Ness
- Return to Summers
- Go to Cultural Museum
- Give Guard a bribe
- Get Hieroglyph copy
- Get Phone Call From Mr. Spoon
- Go to Natural Museum in Fourside
- Get Carrot Key
- Go to Southwest Cave
- Use Carrot Key
- Get Sixth Melody
- Teleport back to Summers
- Talk to Captain at Toto
- Take the Ship from Toto
- Defeat Kraken
- Go to Scaraba

Fourside City

A city the size of Fourside can't be thoroughly explored in a single visit. On your first visit, it is recommended that you talk to the local people and visit the smaller businesses like the bakery. Be sure to take in the show at the Topolla.

Map Key

A Monotoli Bldg.
B Hospital
C Dinosaur Museum
D Topolla Theater
E Monotoli Grand Hotel
F Cafe
G Hints
H Bakery
I Secret Salesman
J Grand Department Store

THE FACE OF DANGER

Many visitors to big cities like Fourside hear about all the crime and they become alarmed, suspecting the worst from everyone on the street. Don't fall into this trap. Dangerous people can be recognized by their strange faces, which often look pale green.

BAKERY

Cookie	$7
Bread Roll	$12
Croissant	$18
Skip Sandwich	$38
Skip Sandwich DX	$98
Lucky Sandwich	$128

Street Salesman

Broken Gadget	$109
Broken Iron	$149
Defense Spray	$500
Rust Promoter	$89

SHINING SPOT

Visit with the monkeys at Dr. Andonuts' lab, then return to the cave that you couldn't enter before north of Stonehenge. Now, you'll meet the boss—Shrooom!—and get a chance to collect the song at Rainy Circle. Shrooom! is vulnerable to PSI Fire, but he'll also take a beating from Jeff's Bottle Rockets and Bombs. With Shrooom! out of the way, go on to Rainy Circle and collect the melody.

ENEMIES

DEPARTMENT STORE SPOOK

After the alien hits the lights and captures Paula, head to the fourth floor to fight the green fiend. It uses Fire, Freeze and Brain Shock. You should use Jeff's Bottle Rockets.

HP...610 / PP...290 / SPEED...19
OFFENSE...82 / DEFENSE...135

DALI'S CLOCK

Dali's Clock may look twisted, but it freezes time and stops your attacks. Use Hypnosis to slow it down.

HP...296 / PP...0 / SPEED...4
OFFENSE...65 / DEFENSE...66

ABSTRACT ART

RAINY CIRCLE

The fourth "Sanctuary" area is beyond Shrooom! in the small valley known as The Rainy Circle. Here a steady shower dimples the waters of a green, peaceful pond. Once you've collected the melody with your Sound Stone, return to the lab south of Stonehenge.

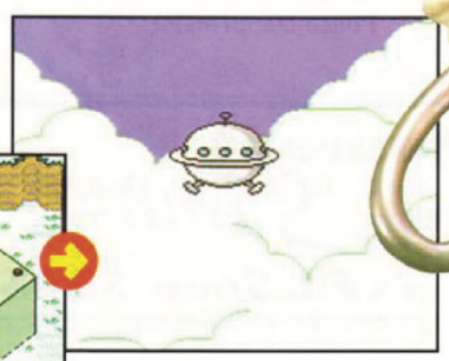
FOCUS

A FRIENDLY CAVEMAN

Dr. Andonuts' caveman friend keeps a shop on his person. Before heading off to visit Shrooom!, say hello to the caveman and stock up on DX Water and Beef Jerky.

SUMMERS VACATION

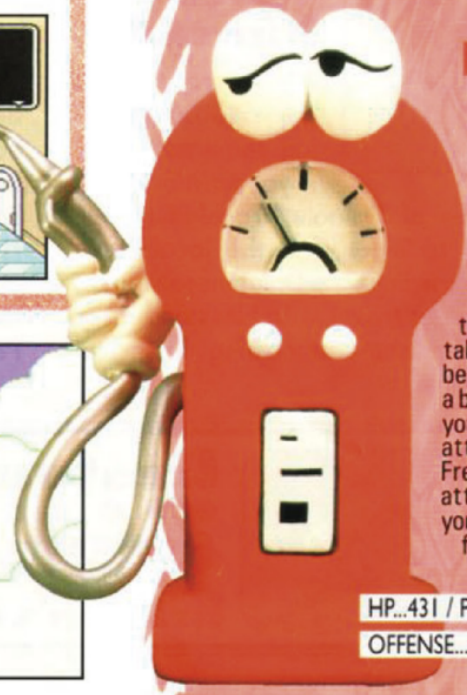
If you get the chance, take the Sky Runner to the sunny, sandy beaches of Summers. You'll enjoy fine dining, a world class hotel, a museum of ancient artifacts, and great surfing. Don't forget to visit the harbor and old town area for information and the best deals in town.



ABSTRACT ART

This art may not make sense to you. It makes Ness sleepy just thinking about it. Use Paralysis to knock some sense into the painting.

HP...301 / PP...60 / SPEED...19
OFFENSE...67 / DEFENSE...79



ROBO-PUMP

The whispering of the Robo-Pump counts down to an explosion. You have three turns to take it out before it throws a bomb. Use your special PSI attack and Freeze, or attack it with your regular fighting option.

HP...431 / PP...0 / SPEED...19
OFFENSE...70 / DEFENSE...113

The *Mother* series was very successful in Japan, but enjoyed a more niche status overseas. As the first game had not been released stateside, *EarthBound* (and Shigesato Itoi) were unfamiliar to Western consumers, at least at first. Over the years *EarthBound* garnered a small but devoted and vocal following, as more and more players were introduced to the game's quirky world. Thanks to the same fan fervor that resurrected *Family Guy* and helped greenlight Joss Whedon's *Serenity*, the cult classic was eventually given new life on Nintendo's Virtual Console and with its inclusion in the Super NES Classic.

EarthBound 64

Nintendo 64 (canceled)

Development of the third *Mother* game began immediately after the completion of *Mother 2*. *Mother 2* had sold well enough to greenlight the next game, with Mr. Itoi helming the project creatively and Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto and HAL Laboratory's Satoru Iwata in the producer's chairs. *Mother 3* was expected to wrap development in 1996. Taking inspiration from *Super Mario 64*, Mr. Itoi intended to make an end result that was as much Hollywood film as it was video game.

The project bounced from the Super Famicom to the Nintendo 64 Disk Drive add-on, and finally as a standard Nintendo 64 cartridge-based game. It was announced as *EarthBound 64* in the West, and a playable version was on display at the 1999 Space World trade show. In 2000, Nintendo canceled *EarthBound 64*, which they estimated being 60% complete at the time, in order to move staff and resources to Project Dolphin (the codename for the Nintendo GameCube console).

Mother 3

2006, Game Boy Advance

Twelve years after development started on *Mother 3*, the game was finally released as a Game Boy Advance title featuring pixel art graphics similar to *Mother 2*. The story had not changed from the game's earlier 64-bit iteration, and featured a new protagonist, Lucas, along with all new characters and a few familiar faces, such as Mr. Saturn, and Ness's next door neighbor, who now serves as the primary antagonist.

Along with Game Boy Advance ports of *Mother 1* and *2*, the game sold very well in Japan, yet was not released in other regions. The complete story of *Mother 3*'s road to release is a long and winding one. But that's a tale for another time. Boing!

EarthBound Beginnings

2015, Wii U

A quarter of a century after its debut on the Famicom, the original *Mother* was released outside of Japan as *EarthBound Beginnings*, available via the Wii U's Virtual Console. The English localization of the game had been complete all this time, but was never released.

Earthbound

Earthbound Credits

Produced and Directed By

Shigesato Itoi

Written By

Shigesato Itoi

Music By

Keiichi Suzuki

Hirokazu Tanaka

Game Designer

Akihiko Miura

Art Director

Kouichi Ooyama

Sound Director

Hirokazu Tanaka

Program Director

Satoru Iwata

US Conversion Director

Kouji Malta

Translation Directors

Marcus Lindblom

Masayuki Miura

Programmers

Satoru Iwata

Satoshi MitsuharaYoshimi Takahashi

Seiji Otoguro

Bou Nakajima

Seika Abe

Yoshiki Suzuki

Jun Yamazaki

Toshiyuki Ueno

Takashi Sasaki

Takashi Sakuma

Kazuo Sato

Kouji Malta

Sound Programmer

Hirokazu Tanaka

System Engineering

Makoto Kanai

Takashi Sakuma

Graphics Artists

Kouichi Ooyama

Hiroyuki Sakiyama

Kouichi Yamada

Makio Kataoka

Tetsuya Notoya

Yasunori Yanagisawa

Special Effects Artists

Tsunekaz Ishihara

Font Designers

Akihiko Miura

Kouichi Ooyama

Concept of Saturn Font By

Shigesato Itoi

Graphic Data Manager

Yasunori Yanagisawa

Message Data Managers

Masayuki Miura

Hitoshi Matsui

Additional Music Composed By

Hiroshi Kanazu

Toshiyuki Ueno

Sound Staff

Toshiyuki Ueno

Kozue Ishikawa

Assistant Programmers

Ikuho Hagiya

Katsuyoshi Irie

Assistant Game Designers

Kouichi Ooyama

Takehiko Masuda

Chiaki Yoshizawa

Masayuki Miura

Akihito Toda

Hitoshi Matsui

Katsuyoshi Irie

Assistant Scenario Writers

Masayuki Miura

Akihito Toda

Hiroyuki Jinnai

English Text Writers

Marcus Lindblom

Dan Owsen

Translators

Keiko Tamura

Yuka Nakata

Chief Debuggers

Takumi Akabane

Hitoshi Matsui

NOA Debug Coordinators

Sean O’Connor

Michael Kelbaugh

Ape Debugging Team

Takahiro Nagai

Junichi Akama

Akira Matsumoto

Nintendo Debug Coordinators

Tohru Hashimoto

Tatsuya Hishida

Nintendo Debugging Team

Kazuhide Ohgoe

Atsushi Miyake

Hajime Nakamura

Mao Hamamoto

Mayumi Tada

Makoto Kedouin

Kimiko Tsuchida

Sayaka Komura

Map Checkers

Mapper Kojima

Katsuyoshi Irie

Sampling Voices

Shigesato OK? Itoi

Yukari Whistle Saito

Hirokazu Belch Koyano

Etsuko Venus Kawano

Takashi MU Watanabe

Opening Rock Guitar

M.D. Seeger

Hardware Support

Hironobu Kakui

Shigeki Yamashiro

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Takashi Kawaguchi

Keizo KatoIkuo Hyakuta

Yukari Saito

Coordinators

Takashi Watanabe

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Hiroyuki Jinnai

Etsuko Kawano

Kazuyuki Yamamoto

Atsuko Kawahara

Sound Producers

Akio Ohmori

Ritsuo Kamimura

Special Thanks To

Kenji Ando

Miyuki Kure

Takayuki Onodera

Fukashi Omorita

Yukio Takahashi

Kazuhiko Amemiya

Yasuhiro Kumagai

Yoshio Hongo

Naoko Kanazawa

Benimaru Itoh

Motohiro Ishii

Hirokazu Koyano

Masao Tottori

Nobuyasu Makino

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Nancy Yoshitake

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NOA Producer

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Supervisor

Shigeru Miyamoto

Executive Producers

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Minoru Arakawa

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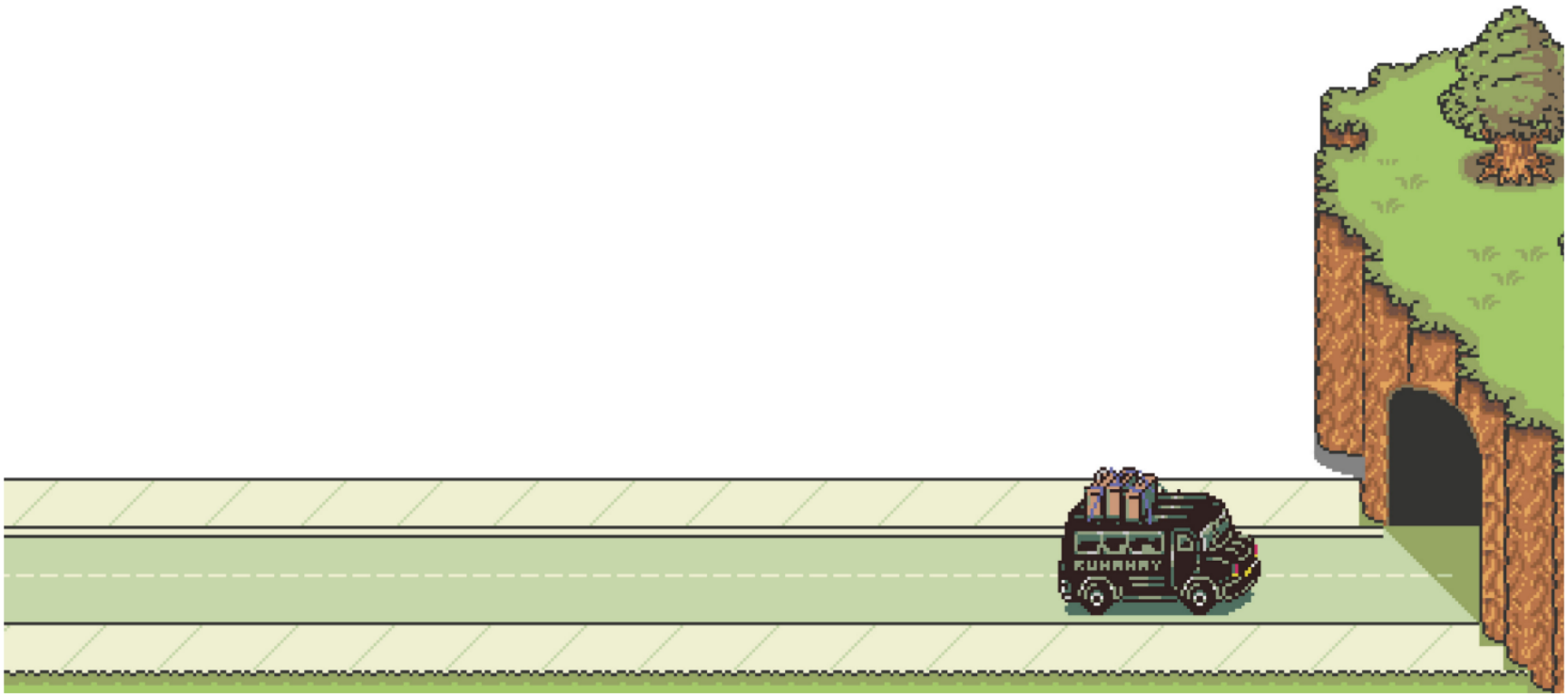


Super Fans

Introduction

There exists an entire generation of adults whose most formative years were defined by Nintendo's contributions to 16-bit gaming. To them, the Super NES wasn't just a console. *F-Zero* wasn't just a game. Zelda wasn't just a character. Being a Nintendo fan was a lifestyle that extended far beyond the reach of the console's iconic dogbone controller.

When asked to reflect back on these foundational years, super fans echo similar stories. The specific game or character may vary, but universal waves of nostalgia wash over them as they share.

How many times did *A Link to the Past* inspire youth to seek out adventure in their very backyards, searching for secret doors and hidden treasure?

How many teens looked to Ness and saw themselves reflected in an unassuming child, knowing that they too could be capable of greatness?

How many young women looked to Samus and felt ready to take on the world or—better yet—the galaxy?

This 16-bit generation learned lessons about friendship and loyalty through RPGs, established their social skills through co-op play, and drew strength from iconic characters. Powerful memories were cemented by sharing these moments with loved ones, sitting side by side in the darkness, gently illuminated by the brilliant landscape of some foreign realm.

Then there were the worlds beyond the television, the ones forged by fans themselves, who found friendship at local game stores, through message boards, and on fansites. It may seem odd that strangers from all walks of life were brought together by a mutual admiration for a tie-wearing gorilla, but the context makes those connections no less real.

Further still, how many found their careers thanks to those 16-bit synapses still firing? Inspired by the sights and sounds of their childhood, fans went on to carve out their place in the industry, hoping to provide today's gamers with an experience as remarkable as the ones they were afforded.

The Super NES ushered in a golden era of games—a perfect storm of vision, technology, and one-of-a-kind characters that matured alongside their audience. It's no wonder that so many gamers look back on the Super NES with such fondness, and choose to keep the dream alive through their own creative efforts today. Nintendo' grasp on a generation of imaginations holds to this day, and in the following pages, you can see how fans have chosen to give back.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Sam Filstrup

“SNES All Stars” | Digital Art

Country: United States

@Artisticfool | @Artisticshenanigans

“The Super NES is my favorite console of all time, not only for being my first console but because of the memories I created with my brothers. This piece represents the games from my childhood that took myself and my brothers to worlds unknown.”

Super Fans

Artist Spotlight: Studio Tamago

“MilkyBoo” | Yann Silba-Loebnitz

“Donkey Kong Dimension” | Yann Silba-Loebnitz

“Yoshi Story” | Zoé Jouaville

Country: France

Medium of Art: Photography & Photo-manipulation

@Studiotamago | Studiotamago.fr

> **“All sources of video games inspire us.”**

Studio Tamago consists of two team members, Yann Silba-Loebnitz and Zoé Jouaville, whose work stands out for its fanciful manifestation of fandom into our world through photography.

The team’s artistic endeavors began six years back, starting with cosplay photography at conventions. Eventually their work evolved in a new direction, when they began bringing games to life through digital composites and photo manipulations. Each piece begins by asking a question: What if our favorite game characters became real?

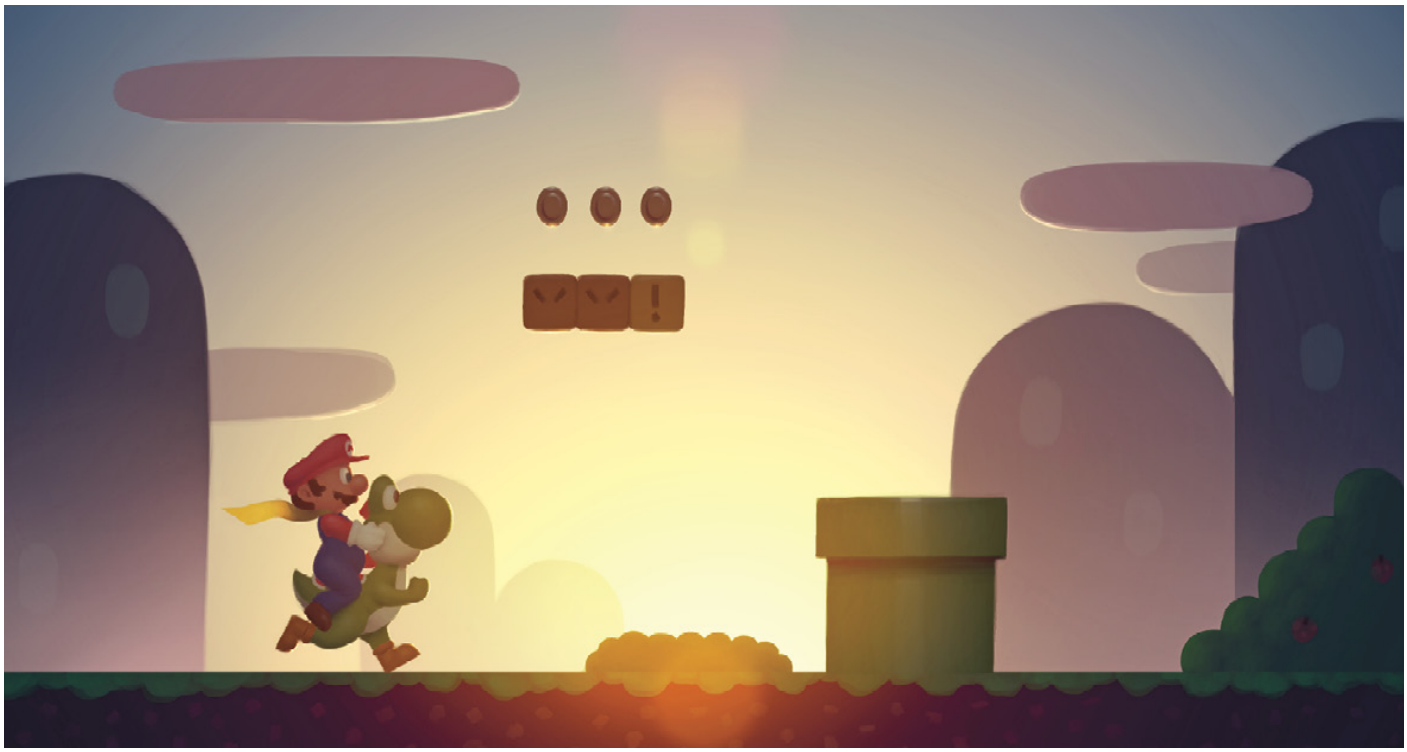
“All sources of video games inspire us,” said Studio Tamago, “Retro or current.” Additional inspiration for their art comes from modern Japanese culture, with regular visits fueling future work.

The goal of each piece is to “Transcribe the imagination that we had as children in images,” said Studio Tamago, arguing that imagination never really leaves us as adults; we just need to rediscover it.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Ben Hickling



“Super Mario World” | Digital Art

Country: United Kingdom

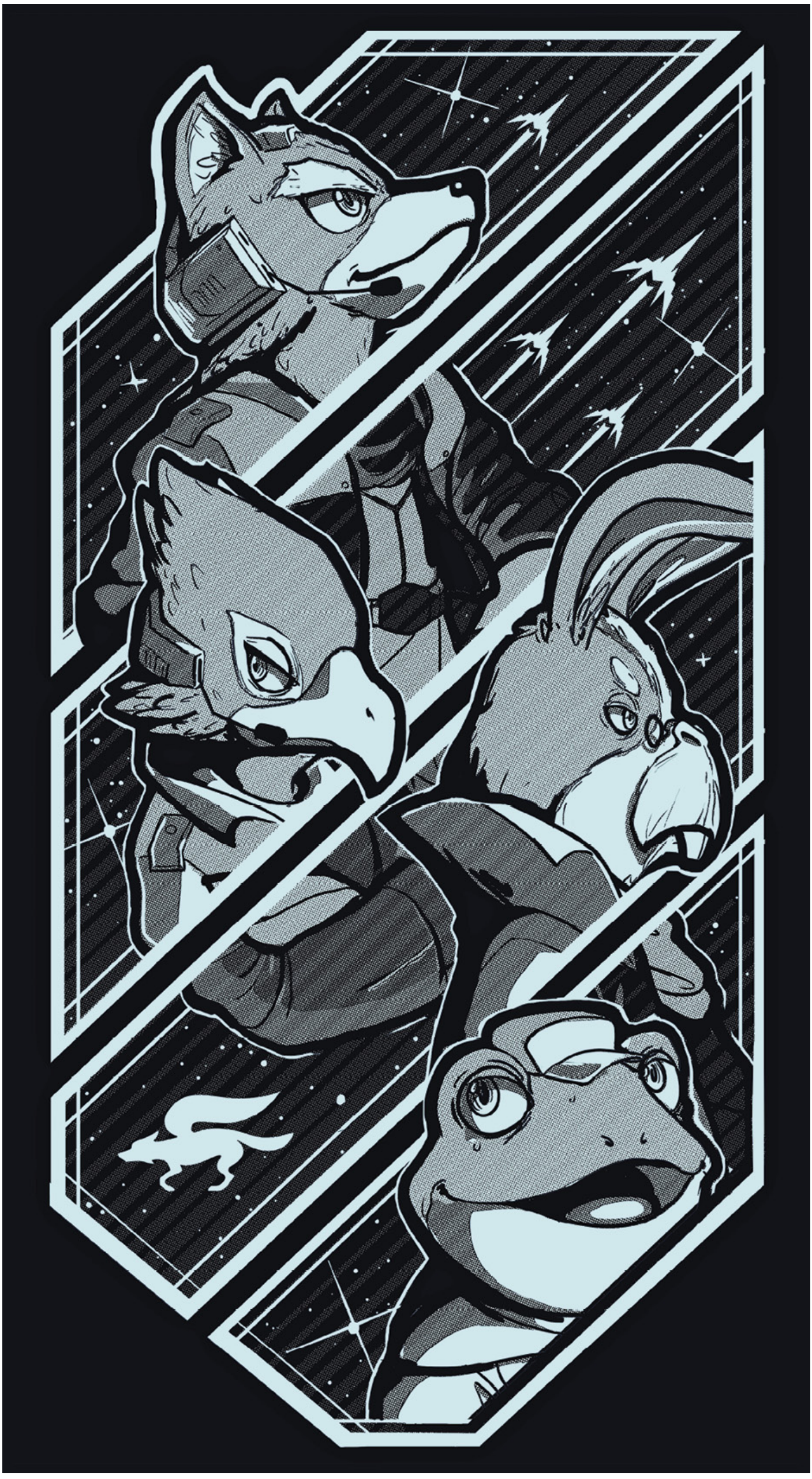
@Benhickling | Benhickling.deviantart.com

“At the time I was going through a phase of painting realistically lit cartoon and video game characters, and after looking at some photos of sunrises and sunsets, the idea of recreating a scene from *Super Mario World* popped into my head. I thought lighting the scene from behind using a sunrise would be quite nice and I could see it quite clearly in my mind.”

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Sam Santala



“Lylatian Defenders” | Digital Art

Country: Finland

@Samsantala | Samsantala.com

“I wanted to do something like those old war posters you see. Something inspiring that would paint the Star Fox team as saviors amongst the stars.”

Artist Spotlight: Orioto

Country: France

Medium of Art: Digital

@Orioto | Orioto.deviantart.com

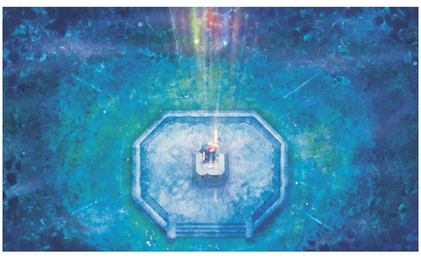
> **“My general inspiration is landscape painters from the 17th and 18th centuries.”**

French fan Orioto has been creating art for 15 years, and a quick glimpse of his portfolio gives ample evidence as to why he is one of the most prolific in the Nintendo community. His work pays homage to iconic Super NES moments, re-imagined in his whimsical style. “My general inspiration is landscape painters from the 17th and 18th centuries,” explained Orioto, “Like the work of Ivan Aivazovsky or Frederic Edwin Church.”

“Nintendo games were my youth really, and it was an interesting challenge to re-imagine them and bring new life to those memories,” he continued. “I started with dynamic compositions showing action from a character, then I switched to a more contemplative style with passive scenery where the landscape is the focus.”

“‘Sweet Jungle’ is one of my favorites because I find that scene so sweet and surreal,” described Orioto, detailing some of his choice works. “It was interesting to play with colors on this one and to find an organic style.”

“Jungle Lineage”



“Master Sword”

“Victory Celebration”

“Seagul Fly”

“Toxic Planet”

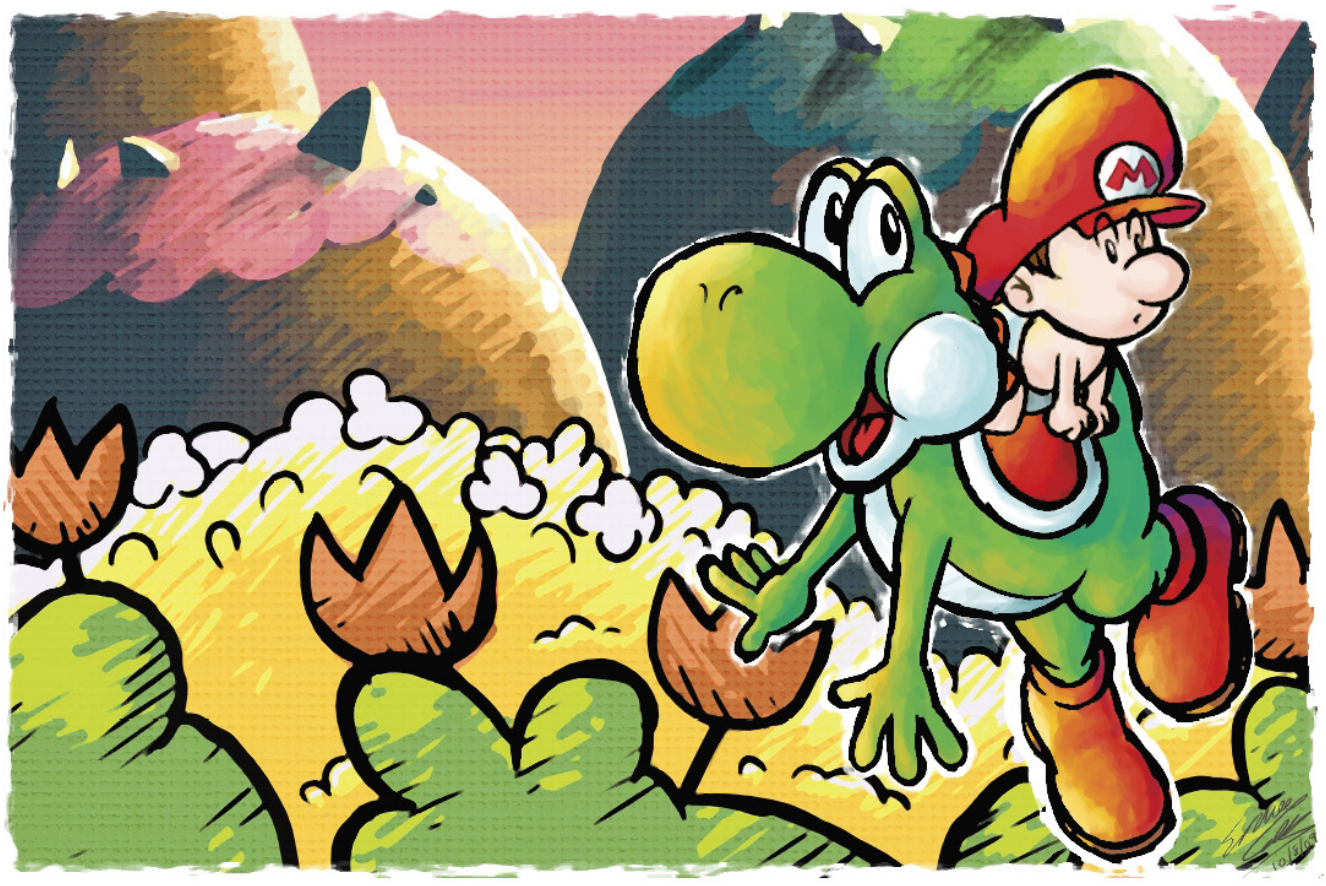
“Forêt en Fleur”

“‘Toxic Planet’ was really fun to do because I wanted to find the link between *Metroid* and *Nausicaa* from Miyazaki. For ‘Forêt en fleur’ I tried to capture an impressionist look, from painters like Monet,” concluded Orioto.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Sophie Pearson



“Yoshi’s Island” | Digital Art

Country: United Kingdom

Facebook.com/Lazyperson202| Lazyperson202.deviantart.com

“Looking back, I was 16 when I made this. At the time I was drawn by the bright and bold design of *Yoshi’s Island*. The colour palette and hand-drawn feel made me want to try the art style myself.”

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Nadyasonika

“Peace in Hyrule”

Country: Mexico | @Nadyasonika | Nadyasonika.com

Photographer: Nelson Castro | United States | @LAphotonet | LAphotonet.com

“My favorite Super NES game is *A Link to the Past*. It was my first Zelda game, and the first difficult game that marked my transition into a true gamer. I had a translator book in one hand, and a notebook in the other, writing down what to do and where to go. It was a big deal for me to finish it! For this photoshoot, we wanted to capture a moment in time—Zelda gathering fairies to restore health to Link!”

Artist Spotlight: Alain "Wuppes" Wildgen

"A Link to the Past"

Country: Luxembourg

Medium of Art: 3D Paper Dioramas

Facebook.com/paperdiorama | Wuppes.tumblr.com

> "The path of every diorama I make is special for me."

Armed with crafting essentials—pen, ruler, scalpel, glue sticks, foam, and cardboard—Alain "Wuppes" Wildgen has become known for his faithful translations of classic Super NES scenes into stunning 3D paper dioramas.

"The path of every diorama I make is special for me," began Wildgen, revealing that each project requires a trip back in time. "After choosing a game from my memories, I get started."

His creative journey began in 2013 after discovering an online papercraft resource and quickly deciding to try his hand at the medium. "Immediately, I had the map from *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* in my head."

The process was trial and error at first, with Wildgen initially using cardboard to achieve the 3D effect. The material wouldn't yield clean cut lines, and so he started looking in a craft store for a better material, and came across foam. This inexpensive material resulted in much more precise lines, and with his newfound knowledge Wildgen was able to successfully materialize the Zelda map into reality. "After finishing the Zelda map, I was motivated to do more dioramas of my favorite childhood games. My new hobby was born."

Speaking to his process, Wildgen explained that he must first find the appropriate assets from sprite websites and map archives. Next, he edits them as needed in an image processing program and prints out each layer for assembly. "Cutting out the individual boxes with a scalpel from the paper and sealing it together with adhesive is very time consuming," said Wildgen.

His hard work has paid off, though, with the dioramas being displayed at various conventions across Europe, including Luxcon, Gamescom, and Made in Asia.

To save other fans time and encourage the growth of the hobby, Wildgen now posts tutorials online. He also hosts workshops for children to teach them how to bring their own imaginations to life through 3D art. "It makes me very happy that I could inspire people with my hobby."

> "It makes me very happy that I could inspire people with my hobby."

"Super Mario World"

"Super Metroid"

"Donkey Kong Country 2"

"Donkey Kong Country 3"

PRIMA GAMES

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Fansite Spotlight: Zelda Universe

Years Online: 16

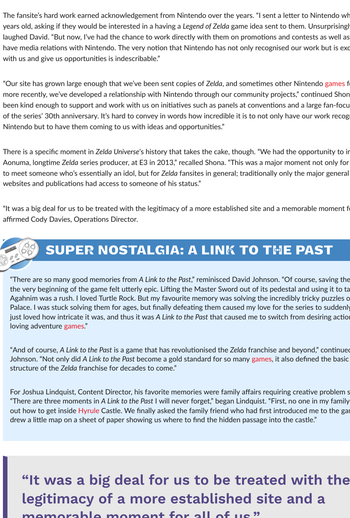
@Zeldauniverse | Facebook.com/zeldauniverse | Zeldauniverse.net

If you're a hardcore fan of Link and his three-decades of adventures, you've likely browsed the endless archives of *Zelda Universe*. What started off as a title-specific tribute, created to highlight the anticipated *Zelda* games on Nintendo 64, eventually evolved into one of the most comprehensive fansites on the web.

"*Zelda Universe* was created in 2001," explained Shona Johnson, Operations and Projects Manager. "It started off as a small website primarily covering the Nintendo 64 *Zelda* games, but quickly grew to provide detailed coverage of all the games." With this expansion came a new and more ambitious goal—to position *Zelda Universe* as a home for all *Zelda* fans and "a one-stop-shop for information, news, media, game guides, and the largest community of *Zelda* fans online."

Pre-2001

It is safe to say that *Zelda Universe* has met and exceeded that goal, with their impact transcending the online realm. "I've had the privilege of meeting up with many fellow community members over the years, and they have significantly impacted my life in many ways," said David Johnson, Features Editor, who shares a surname with Shona for good reason. Meeting up with community members encouraged him to take the plunge and relocate to Seattle for work, knowing that he would already have a network of friends in the area. "I even met my wife through the *Zelda* community! After befriending her and growing together over many years, she spurred me to move to another country to be with her," he continued, speaking of his spouse Shona, who he now lives with in Australia. "While many of the other fans I originally met online wouldn't impact my life quite so significantly, those meetups have provided strong relationships that feel like familial ties that have lasted throughout the years."



2001

Zelda Universe's longest-running community is that of their message boards, described as the "heart of the community", which have been online since 2002. Evolving with the times, *Zelda Universe* has successfully captured a sizable social following, too. "Today, we have a really diverse and widespread community," explained Shona. "Our site alone has communities on social media, YouTube, and we launched a Discord server a few months ago which brings back memories of old IRC channels. We're in the process of establishing a presence on Twitch and ran our first marathon charity stream earlier this year with great community engagement."

> **"We have a really diverse and widespread community."**

The fansite's hard work earned acknowledgement from Nintendo over the years. "I sent a letter to Nintendo when I was 11 years old, asking if they would be interested in a having a *Legend of Zelda* game idea sent to them. Unsurprisingly they did not," laughed David. "But now, I've had the chance to work directly with them on promotions and contests as well as being able to have media relations with Nintendo. The very notion that Nintendo has not only recognised our work but is excited to work with us and give us opportunities is indescribable."

"Our site has grown large enough that we've been sent copies of *Zelda*, and sometimes other Nintendo games for review, and more recently, we've developed a relationship with Nintendo through our community projects," continued Shona. "They've been kind enough to support and work with us on initiatives such as panels at conventions and a large fan-focused celebration of the series' 30th anniversary. It's hard to convey in words how incredible it is to not only have our work recognized by Nintendo but to have them coming to us with ideas and opportunities."

There is a specific moment in *Zelda Universe*'s history that takes the cake, though. "We had the opportunity to interview Eiji Aonuma, longtime *Zelda* series producer, at E3 in 2013," recalled Shona. "This was a major moment not only for us being able to meet someone who's essentially an idol, but for *Zelda* fansites in general; traditionally only the major general gaming websites and publications had access to someone of his status."

"It was a big deal for us to be treated with the legitimacy of a more established site and a memorable moment for all of us," affirmed Cody Davies, Operations Director.

SUPER NOSTALGIA: A LINK TO THE PAST

"There are so many good memories from *A Link to the Past*," reminisced David Johnson. "Of course, saving the princess at the very beginning of the game felt utterly epic. Lifting the Master Sword out of its pedestal and using it to take down Agahnim was a rush. I loved Turtle Rock. But my favourite memory was solving the incredibly tricky puzzles of the Ice Palace. I was stuck solving them for ages, but finally defeating them caused my love for the series to suddenly blossom. I just loved how intricate it was, and thus it was *A Link to the Past* that caused me to switch from desiring action games to loving adventure games."

"And of course, *A Link to the Past* is a game that has revolutionised the *Zelda* franchise and beyond," continued David Johnson. "Not only did *A Link to the Past* become a gold standard for so many games, it also defined the basic story structure of the *Zelda* franchise for decades to come."

For Joshua Lindquist, Content Director, his favorite memories were family affairs requiring creative problem solving. "There are three moments in *A Link to the Past* I will never forget," began Lindquist. "First, no one in my family could figure out how to get inside Hyrule Castle. We finally asked the family friend who had first introduced me to the game, and she drew a little map on a sheet of paper showing us where to find the hidden passage into the castle."

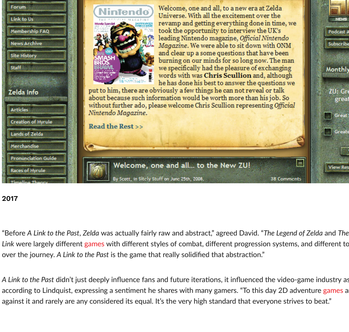
> **"It was a big deal for us to be treated with the legitimacy of a more established site and a memorable moment for all of us."**

"Second, when we finally made it through Hyrule Castle, we couldn't figure out how to defeat the Ball and Chain Trooper. At this point, my father gave up playing entirely and left it up to my brother and me to figure out the rest of the game. After a lot of trial and error, I figured out that you could defeat the Ball and Chain Trooper by picking up pots in the nearby prison cell and throwing them at him!"

"Third, when I finally had the Master Sword and confronted Agahnim, I was totally stumped. At this point, I was frequently playing with a cousin, and we tried everything we could think of to beat Agahnim. In a moment of desperation, we figured out that the Bug-Catchers Net would reflect Agahnim's magic! It was several years (following the release of *Ocarina of Time*) until we realized that you were supposed to use the Master Sword.

"These experiences figuring out the solutions to puzzles and boss strategies made me fall in love with the game, and eventually the entire series. It would take hours to write how this one game ultimately changed my life; there are countless friends, skills, and experiences I likely would have never had if I had not played *A Link to the Past* as a child."

What does the *Zelda* franchise owe to *A Link to the Past*? "Everything," according to Lindquist. "*A Link to the Past* is the first game to really define the 'Zelda' formula.' Some games deviate from it, but most of the popular games in the series follow the sequence first established in *A Link to the Past*. The game also first introduced many of the series' most iconic enemies and items. Who could imagine the series without the Hookshot?"



2017

"Before *A Link to the Past*, Zelda was actually fairly raw and abstract," agreed David. "*The Legend of Zelda* and *The Adventure of Link* were largely different games with different styles of combat, different progression systems, and different tools acquired over the journey. *A Link to the Past* is the game that really solidified that abstraction."

A Link to the Past didn't just deeply influence fans and future iterations, it influenced the video-game industry as a whole according to Lindquist, expressing a sentiment he shares with many gamers. "To this day 2D adventure games are measured against it and rarely are any considered its equal. It's the very high standard that everyone strives to beat."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Xavier Garcia

“VS Kraid” | Digital Art

Country: United States

@RagingSpaniard | Raging-spaniard.com

“This piece is aiming to explore what a different kind of *Metroid* game would feel like while retaining very obvious cues from the original encounter versus Kraid in *Super Metroid*. I love Samus, one of the original women in video games! Strong, focused, and unrelenting no matter what the danger is. She is an inspiration that reminds us that no matter the obstacle in front of us, as long as you keep grinding ahead, you can find a way through.”

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Gonzalo “Genzoman” Ordoñez

“Star Fox Team” | Digital Art

Country: Chile

@Mrgenzoman | Genzoman.deviantart.com

“I can’t remember a game where I spent more time on Super NES than *Star Fox*. My friends and I played a lot after school and we finished it several times trying to get better times and scores. I have very fond memories of playing in Venom or Space Armada with my brother, pitted against that terrifying Andross polygonal face. The OST is tied to my teen years, and the ending theme is maybe my favorite theme of any Super NES game. This piece was inspired by the original *Star Fox* artwork on the Super NES from the cover to the booklet and promotional art. I loved the puppets!”

Music Spotlight: Video Games Live

@VideoGamesLive | Facebook.com/VidGamesLive | Videogameslive.com

Video Games Live (VGL for short) was born from a noble mission: to honor video games as an artistic medium, and bridge the gap between generations by bringing electronic entertainment to a symphonic setting.

More than just a concert, VGL's website says it best: "It's the power and emotion of a symphony orchestra mixed with the excitement and energy of a rock concert and the technology and interactivity of a video game all completely synchronized to amazing cutting-edge video screen visuals, state-of-the-art lighting and special on-stage interactive segments with the audience." For anyone who has been to one of the over 400 concerts put on since 2005, they know the description is spot on.

In the 12 years since its debut concert, Video Games Live has only continued to pick up steam, receiving several Guinness World Records, including "Most Videogame Concerts Performed" and "Largest Audience for a Live Videogame Music Concert." The former was achieved with a staggering 750,023 fans watching via livestream, and 2,086 in-person at the venue in Beijing.

Though the setlist often changes as it tours the world, classic Nintendo titles are the headliners of VGL. Fans eagerly await the familiar melodies of *Mario*, *Zelda*, *Metroid*, and *Donkey Kong* to begin.

VGL wouldn't have existed without video-game composer Tommy Tallarico, who, among his more formal accomplishments, you could easily argue is one of gaming's biggest superfans. His two passions growing up were video games and music. "The first time I ever saw a video game system was in 1975. Me and my dad were over at our friend's house and they have the Coleco Telstar, an old faux-woodgrain system which was basically a glorified *Pong* and that changed my life," said Tallarico, explaining that the ability to control action on a TV was "unreal" at the time. His love for the hobby solidified with the NES release. That hobby evolved into a career when the Super NES hit the market, which occurred at the pivotal time he was beginning to break into the industry as a composer. The technical advancements for sound on the Super NES made it extra appealing to him as a composer, and resulted in phenomenal game scores from Tallarico and numerous peers.

> "The music becomes a part of you. No company has done that better than Nintendo."

Many of the Super NES's most memorable games have become staples at his show, demanded by fans who wouldn't feel fulfilled experiencing a VGL without them. "We've traveled all over the world for the last 15 years. *Zelda*, *Mario*, *Donkey Kong Country*, *Metroid* – those are all things that we do in almost every single show we do no matter where we are in the world," explained Tallarico, also revealing that they have an entire segment dedicated to his all time favorite game, *Super Mario World*. Tallarico believes that fans become emotionally attached to gaming music because they see themselves as the character. "The music becomes a part of you. No company has done that better than Nintendo."

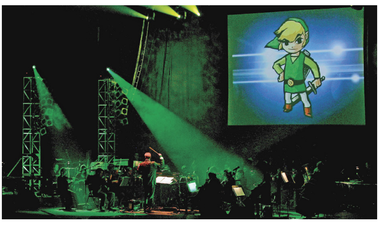
Tallarico and Kondo share a moment on stage.

There are a handful of reasons Tallarico feels Nintendo's music has the edge. "What makes Nintendo's music better than everything else out there—the works of Koji Kondo or Davis Wels—the thing that connects people to music the most and it's the reason why we're still humming Beethoven 250 years later, is melody. Melody is the most important thing in music," he continued. "250 years from now, people are still going to be humming Mario, and that's really amazing to think about. A composer like Koji Kondo is the Beethoven of our generation, just like John Williams is for film scores. His melodies are going to live on forever."

Tallarico has had many opportunities to share moments with these music luminaries over the years, as dozens have attended his concerts and even performed live. "I have Koji Kondo come on screen and he introduces the music to *Mario* and *Zelda*. What he says is very funny, he goes, '30 years ago, when I originally created the music to *Mario Brothers*, I never thought 30 years later that people would still want to hear it.' Here we are today listening and still enjoying this incredible music and there's something to be said about that. The melodies that Nintendo puts out there are second to none."

Although Mr. Kondo has made several concert appearances, Tallarico shared an emotional moment with Mr. Kondo when he first heard his work played live by a full orchestra. "Likewise, when we were in Tokyo, we played two big shows at the Tokyo Game Show and it was the very first time that Koji Kondo ever performed in Japan. Can you believe this? I couldn't believe it. I thought he'd done it before. Again, to have him perform in his own country for the very first time, it was emotional."

Seeing the influence of his work in person, Tallarico remembered asking Mr. Kondo what he thought of the fan tributes to his work which poured in from around the world. "He said, 'Look, for me, that's the ultimate honor to know that my music encouraged someone else to create art, to create a piece of music, to be inspired.'"



Video Games Live has done more than just entertain over the years. Like game music itself, it has had the ability to bring people together in meaningful ways. One story in particular has always stuck with Tallarico. "Over 10 years ago we were playing with a very, very prestigious symphony—the Pittsburgh Symphony. They've been around since the 1800s. Johann Strauss used to conduct for them. This is big time orchestra. Before the show a woman comes up to me who was playing in the woodwind section, and she had tears in her eyes and she said, 'Tommy, I just want to thank you so much for creating this show and taking it around the world.'"

"I said, 'Oh, it's very kind of you. Thank you so much,' remembered Tallarico. "She goes, 'No. You don't understand. I had been playing in this orchestra for 20 years and I'm a single mom of a 17-year-old son. It's been tough raising him as a single parent, and I have always wanted my son to come and see one of my shows. I wanted him to see me perform because it's a great honor to be a part of the Pittsburgh Symphony. For years and years and years he had never seen me play. Then the tears start coming down her cheeks and she said, 'Until tonight. Tonight, not only is my 17-year-old son here to see me perform for the very first time, but all he's been doing is bragging to his friends in school. He's here with a whole bunch of his friends and all he's been doing is bragging about how his mom is going to be playing the music to *Mario* and *Zelda* tonight.' She said 'You know for the first time, I was able to connect with him.' The music to *Mario* and *Zelda* changed this woman's life, and she'd never even played a video game. It's pretty amazing."

PRIMA GAMES

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

KlausBoss

“Slipslide Ride” | Digital Art

Country: Brazil

@KlausBoss | Klausboss.deviantart.com

“My inspiration for this piece came through another piece of art with beautiful ice effects. I wanted to achieve the same look with Nintendo art. I remembered the Slipslide Ride level of *Donkey Kong Country* on the Super NES, and realized it would be a perfect level for me to achieve my goal. The artistic direction and music in the series was always sensational, and the extreme charisma of the little monkeys captivated me.”

Super Fans

Artist Spotlight: Per Fhager

Photos by Kim Svensson | **@Studiokimsvensson**

Country: Sweden

Medium of Art: Needle Point

@Perfhager | Perfhager.deviantart.com

Swedish Artist Per Fhager's work is impressive at first glance. It's even more impressive when the scale of what you're seeing registers. When isolated against a white wall, his stunning needle point illustrations don't convey a sense of scale, the enormity of the work only truly discernable in a shot of the artist on his knees, unfurling a massive mural of wool.

"The video games of the '80s and '90s have had a huge impact on my personal creativity," began Fhager. "The movement, colours, and music combined with a unique aesthetic immediately captured my imagination as a child. The catalyst of my artistry is love; the love of video games and the love of craft."

The odd juxtaposition of selecting such a traditional craft to pay tribute to a "modern phenomenon" isn't lost on Fhager. In fact, that is the crux of his work. "In my art I translate video game screenshots into needle point, as the system of pixels is identical to stitches on canvas."

A self-described "maker" since childhood, dabbling in everything from drawing to building to sewing, Fhager studied textile crafts in high school and has a bachelor's degree in fashion design from Stockholm. His studies translated into a career in textile prints for kids wear. A few years back he left his fulltime job to focus on his personal art.

"In my early school years I could spend hours with my NES turned on, nose almost touching the TV, drawing Goomba and Lakitu sprites on graph paper. As I've always found myself drawn to visuals based on systems and repetition, like repeated fabric patterns or Moroccan tiles, the allure of pixel graphics is hardly surprising. I'm in awe of the video game creators of the time who managed to create these vivid characters and worlds with such limited tools."

His first major needle point piece took two years to complete, but his work began to increase at a steady pace as his technique improved. "At the time I was a regular at a yarn shop in Stockholm, and at one point the owner asked if I wanted to exhibit my needle point works in the store window. This exposure resulted in an art gallery approaching me, gallerist Jan Stene at Stene Projects." Fhager and Stene now collaborate frequently, and his works are regularly displayed in the Stockholm gallery, as well as Art Copenhagen, the Swedish Association of Art, the Stockholm Video Game Museum, and the London-based Belmacz.

> **"The catalyst of my artistry is love; the love of video games and the love of craft."**

All of Fhager's work is done by hand. "Performing this slow and methodical craft is a fundamental part of my artistry, and the satisfaction of reaching the end and seeing the finished result is a unique and emotional experience, further fueling my creativity."

His research requires revisiting games, a task Fhager seems to enjoy as part of the creative process. "A lot of time is spent playing video games, finding the scenes I want to recreate. Once a choice of visual is established I start to look at the colours, material, and dimensions. Translating the TV screen's shiny RGB colours into matte yarn can be tough, and I can spend days trying out different colour combinations before brutally rejecting everything and starting over."

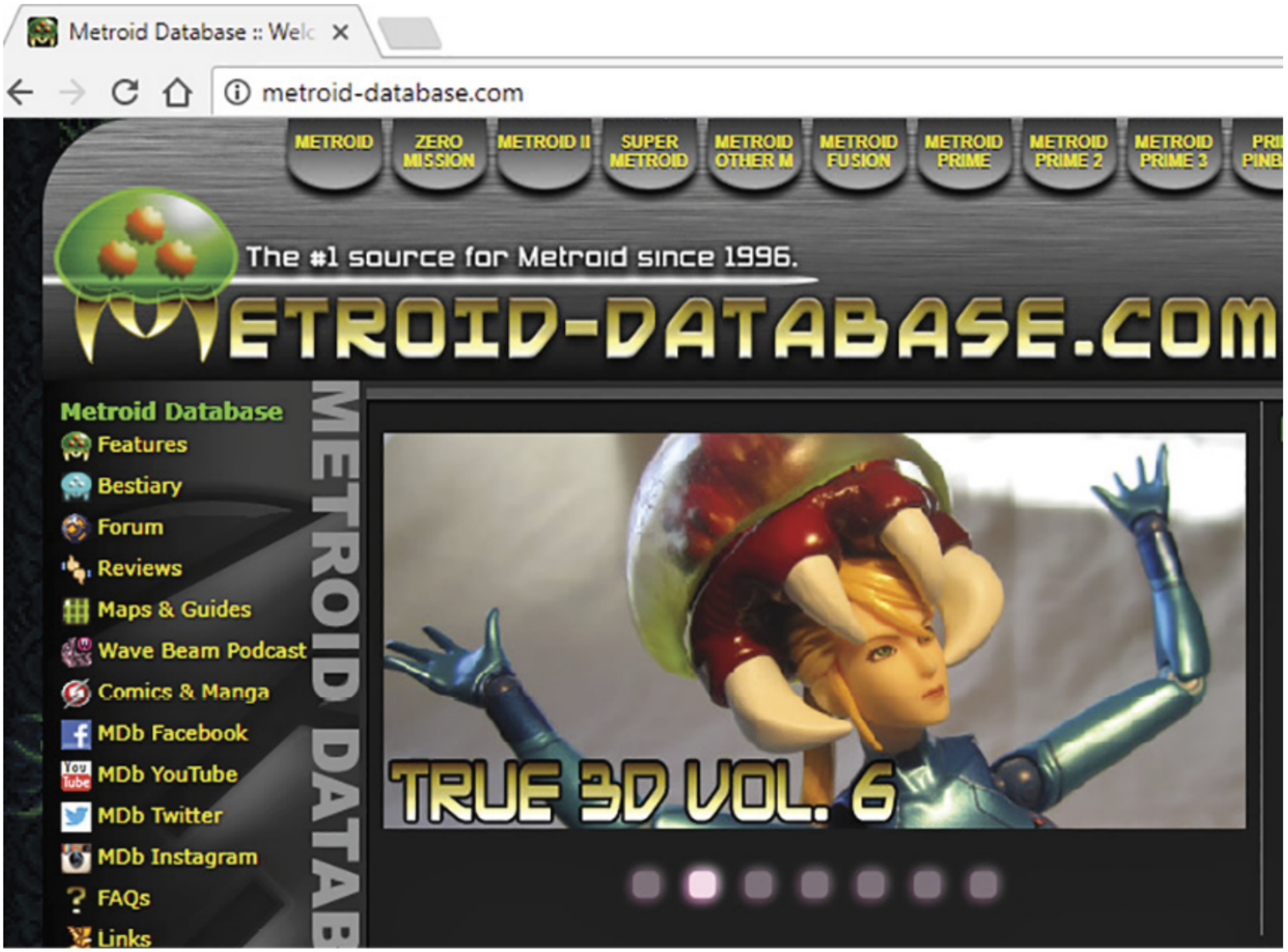
Getting technical, Fhager explained that "Most of my works still share approximately the same measurements: around 80 cm across. These dimensions are largely dictated by the resolution of the video game screens I use as the source of my motifs, usually 256 x 240 pixels." A solo exhibition called *GAME OVER* at the Textile Museum of Sweden in 2016 boasted five pieces measuring almost two meters across each. "Experiencing my own, and the viewers', impressions of these towering, cross stitch pieces filling up an entire room strengthened my belief in the timeless appeal of gaming aesthetics and handmade needle point craft."

"The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past" | 2011 | 56x51cm | Cross Stitch Needle Point | Cotton

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Fansite Spotlight: Metroid Database



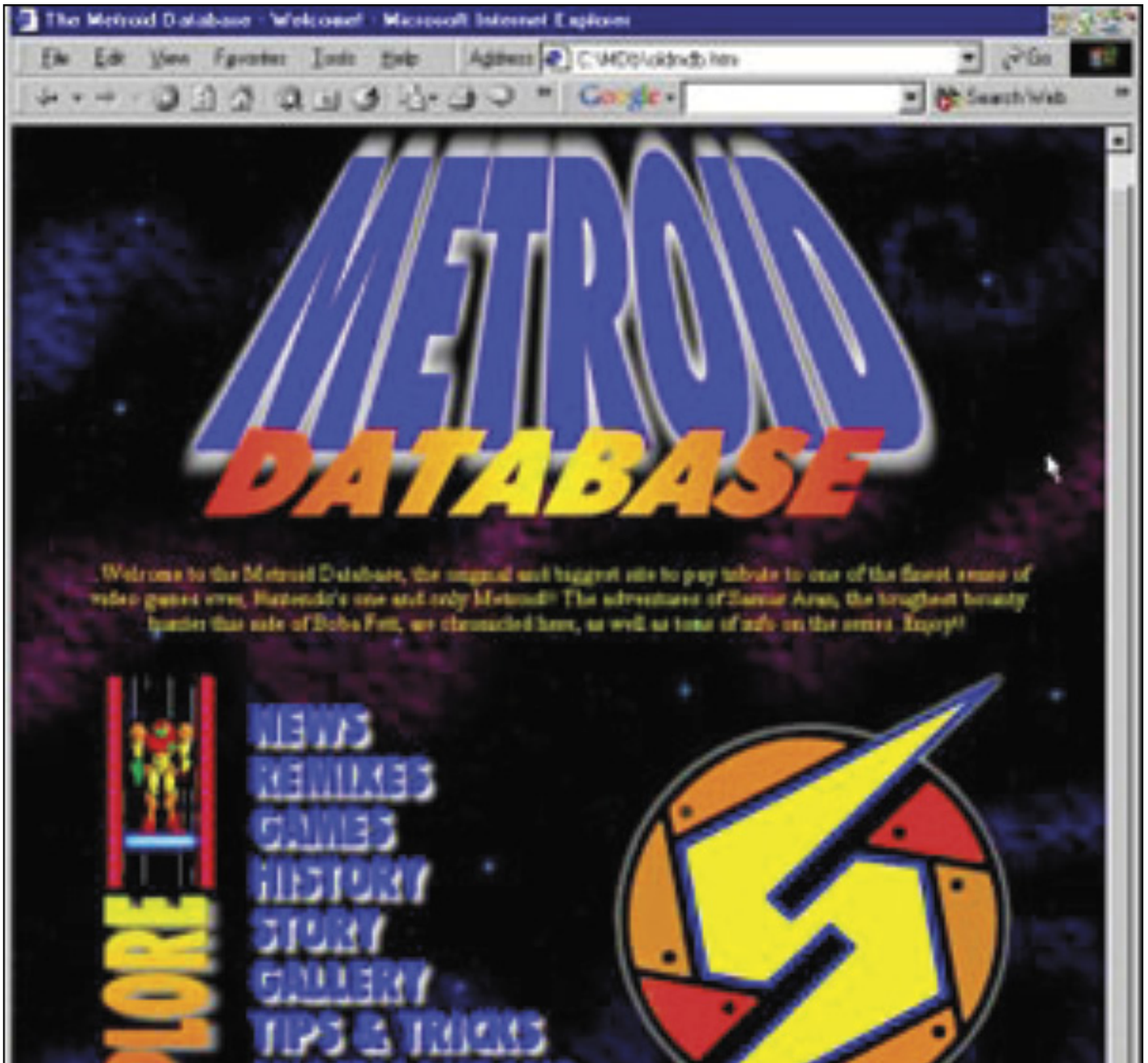
Years Online: 20

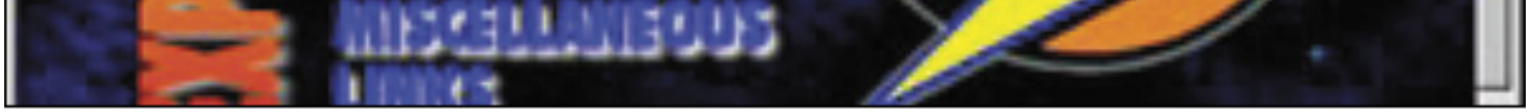
@MetroidDatabase | Facebook.com/metroiddatabase | Metroid-database.com

> **“My favorite part about the Nintendo community is that there is just so much information available, from wikis to scans and interviews, if a fan wants to delve really deep into a game, these sites have all that information.”**

Established in 1996, *Metroid Database* had the same intent as most newly minted fansites: provide a wealth of franchise information in a single space in order to unite people with a shared passion. “Back in the ’90s, the only way you could get this information was by word of mouth or digging through strategy guides or back issues of *Nintendo Power*,” explained Devin “CapCom” Monnens, a longtime editor on the site.

“The initial goal was to be the place people could go for *Metroid* news and strategies, discuss ‘*Metroid 64*’ rumors, and enjoy chatting with like-minded individuals about *Metroid*,” elaborated Ryan Barrett, known as “Infinity’s End”, an editor and designer. “The original website was all the creation of TJ Rappel, who had no clue at the time that its legacy would last this long.” Rappel eventually passed the torch to Monnens, Barrett, and a web programmer named Jesse, all three who were previously community members active on the original forums.




MISCELLANEOUS

1996

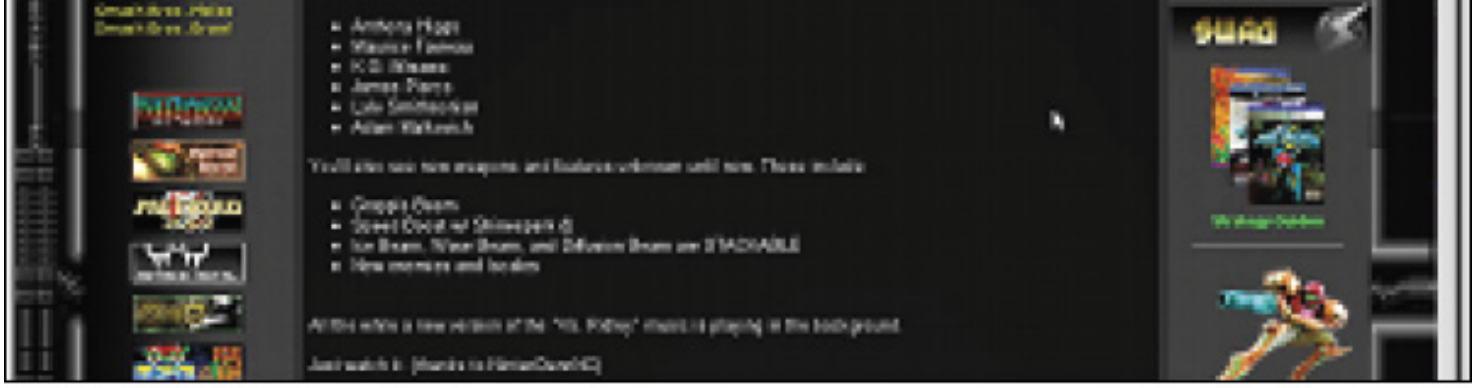
metroid
database
about
reviews
news
features
games
characters
history
story
bugs
gallery
tips & tricks
miscellaneous
show vault
multiworld
message
links
LOTS OF NEW METROID PRIME SCREENS AVAILABLE

1998

metroid database
METROIDDATABASE
OUT WITH THE OLD
Recycle Bin
THE ALL NEW METROID DATABASE IS NOW LIVE!
remixes
headlines
releases

2002

METROID-DATABASE.COM
METROID DATABASE
33 07 48 49
Other M
True 3D: Volume 3
Full review by guest editor silvermike!
RELEXES
RELEASES



2010

While many consider *Metroid Database* the "hingepin" of the fandom's community, especially due to the Bestiary which aims to catalogue every creature in the series, the *Metroid* community as a whole appears to strive for solidarity. "I have interacted with people and staff of all the other major English *Metroid* fansites in some form or fashion—*Metroid Headquarters*, *Metroid Recon*, *Shinesparkers*, *Metroid2002.com*, *Metroid Construction*, the *Metroid* Reddit, and so on," listed Barrett, giving his fellow fansites a shout-out.

"My favorite part about the Nintendo community is that there is just so much information available, from wikis to scans and interviews," detailed Monnens. "If a fan wants to delve really deep into a game, these sites have all that information."

"I have made friends and met many people in real life through the *Metroid* community," continued Barrett. "I have met Devin and Jesse in real life, as well as a few other *Metroid* fansite admins, and I keep in touch with a good many of them to this day." Barrett also has quite a memorable gift from fansite creator Rappel, who also happens to be a professional tattoo artist—a Samus tattoo on his left arm. "People have told me, unflinchingly, that the *Metroid Database* has drastically impacted their lives in one way or another. It's been very satisfying and gratifying being a part of this community and I would never regret a moment I spent helping it grow."

"It's a surprise how excited some people can get when people find out you work on the site," added Monnens. "I'm really glad our fans are as happy to visit our site today as I was back in 1999."

SUPER NOSTALGIA: SUPER METROID

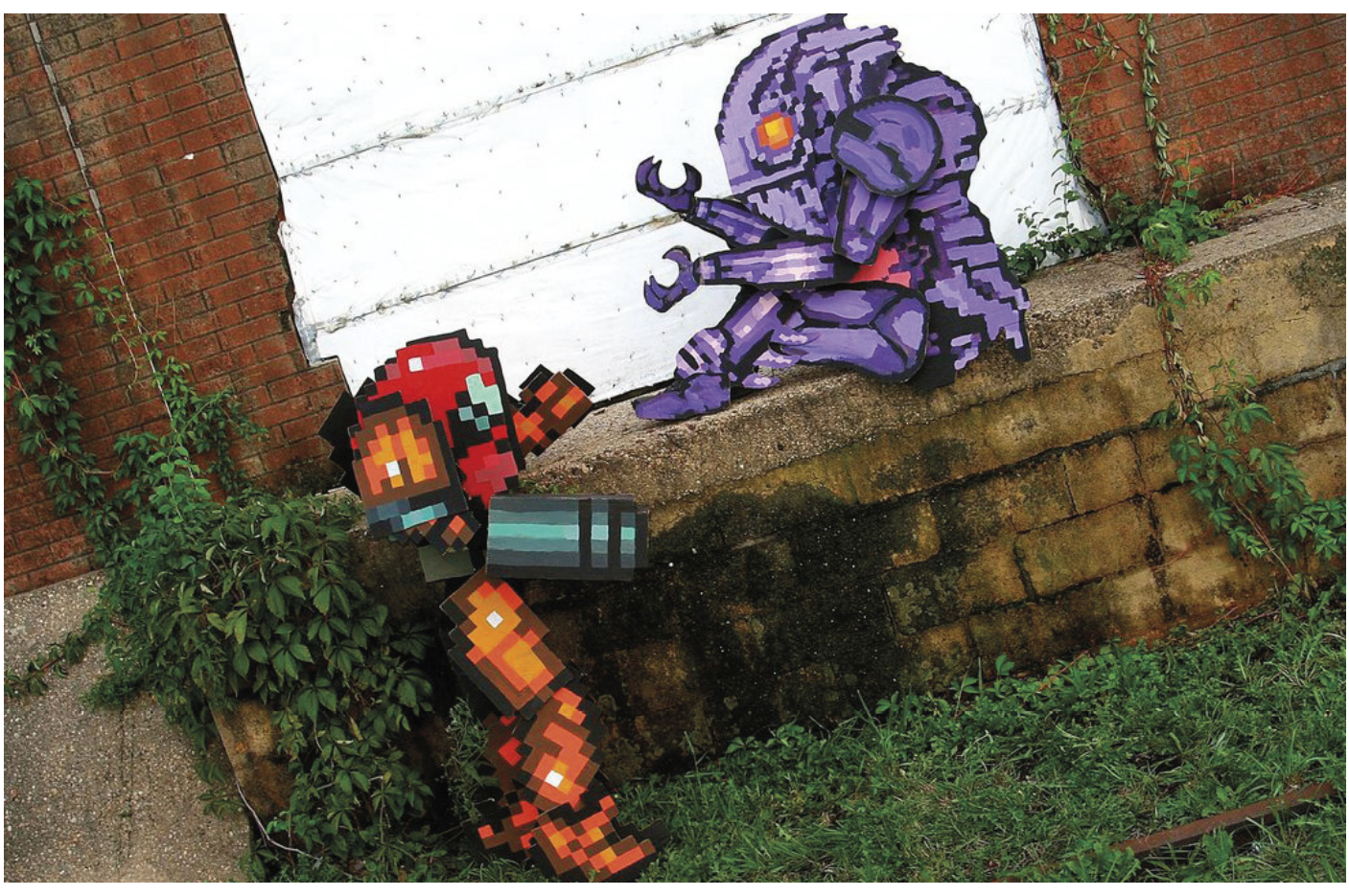
"I had been a big *Metroid* fan at that point," said Barrett, reflecting on the release of *Super Metroid*. "I played the original and the Game Boy sequel but had never beat them. They were too difficult for me even then, and I didn't know about NARPAS SWORD." *Super Metroid* became the first *Metroid* game he beat in full, before returning to complete all the games later on. "I can remember being blown away by the animations and graphics and especially a general feeling of enormous expanse while traversing the map. I knew in my heart this game was special. It was different than anything I had ever played before and it was definitely the most 'mature.'"

Not yet old enough to drive, Monnens recalled performing his new-game ritual, jumping in the car and furiously reading the game's manual while his parents navigated back home from the store, before rushing into his house to pop the cartridge in the Super NES. "My favorite moment started when I first turned on the game, from the eerie title screen, the fantastic theme song of the intro, the whole Ceres fight with Ridley and escape, then exploring a supposedly deserted Zebes, each new area had a vibrant environment, cool and creepy enemies, and a fantastic soundtrack. Although I was a fan since first playing *Metroid II*, *Super Metroid*'s introduction is what really cemented it for me. The game certainly captured the hearts of many players, and some of them eventually became game developers as a result."

Barrett expanded on how he feels the game influenced the industry; *Super Metroid*'s legacy is a topic he has literally written essays on. "A lot of people will say it established the Metroidvania genre, but it goes far beyond that. The game emphasizes a dark, eerie mood and atmosphere; this was territory that was rarely touched on during games made in that time period. The game takes its grip on you immediately after you flip the power switch on the Super NES, and never lets go until the final shot of Zebes exploding. It's intense. *Super Metroid* has deeply inspired more games that I could possibly list."

"The game also does something very courageous: despite the brief cutscene at the beginning of the game, there is nearly no text in the whole game, yet it's able to tell you strictly through visual cues how to play, where to go, what to do, and never really leaves you in a place that you can't eventually figure out. It's one of the pinnacles of game design. Countless other people have waxed poetic about the intricacies of *Super Metroid*, and I could probably spend hours talking about it, but it's definitely made an immense impact on game designers' lives, the industry in general, and 2D platformers overall," concluded Barrett. "It belongs in the World Video Game Hall of Fame, but that time has yet to come. I'm confident it will, someday."

Artist Spotlight: Dan Cattell



Country: United States

Medium of Art: Pixelated Costumes (CosPIX)

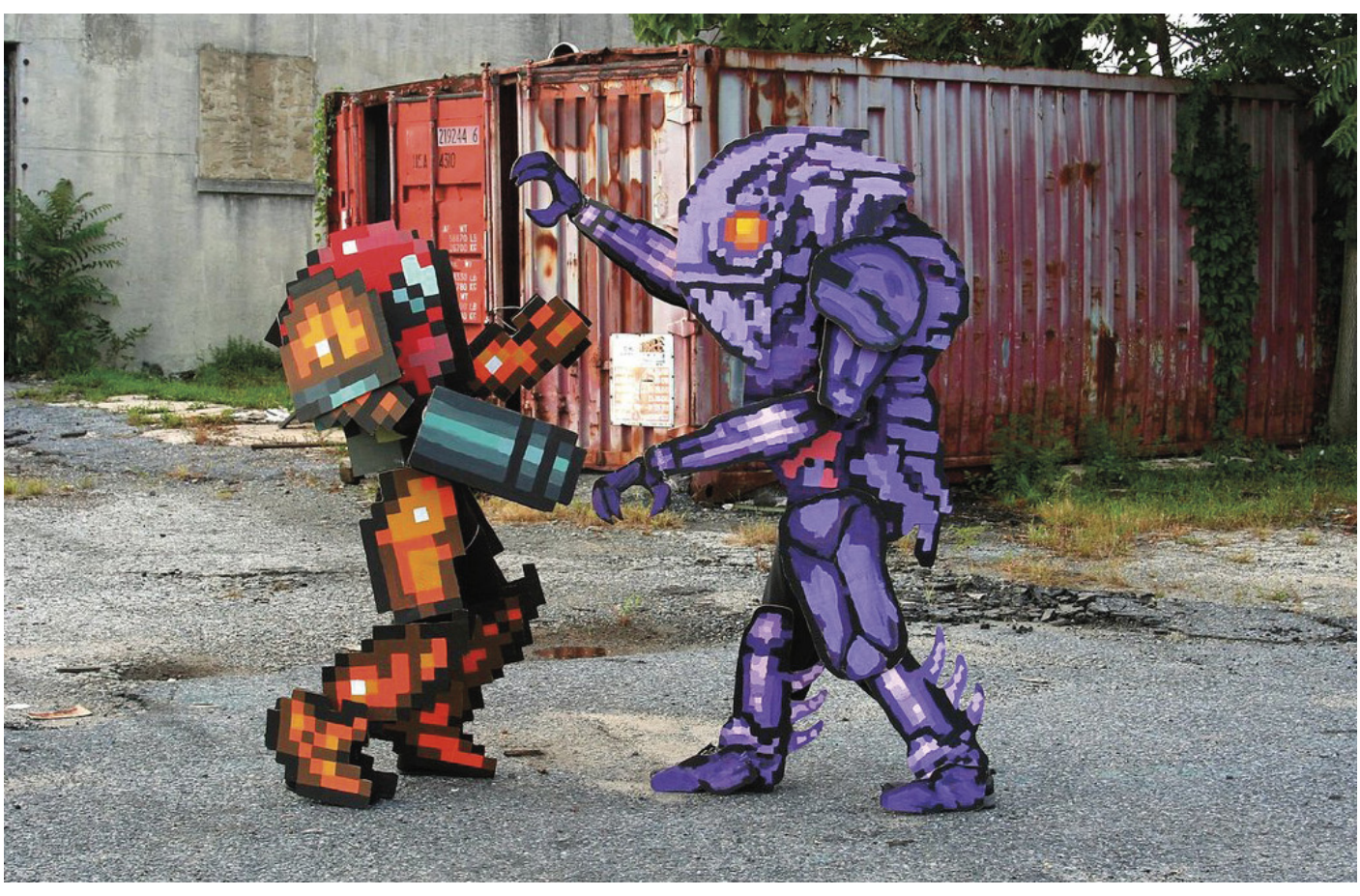
Facebook.com/dancattellart | Chozoboy.deviantart.com

Penny-pinching was the catalyst behind these ingenious fan-favorite ensembles, made of simple supplies including acrylic paint, canvas, and cardboard. “Frugality, the greatest motivator for creativity!” began Dan Cattell, the mastermind behind his new breed of costumes called “CosPIX”. “I saw a cardboard District 9 prawn costume and that led me to realize that cardboard is a cheap and workable base material.”

As a lifelong dabbler in art, inspiration has come from many facets of life for Cattell, such as brass fastener puppets, 2D animation, sprite art, optical illusions, and more explicitly, works from Alexa Meade and Picasso. Nintendo was also a longtime inspiration. “I studied animation and arts at Rutgers University specifically because I was inspired by Nintendo’s game design philosophies,” Cattell explained.

> **“I studied animation and arts at Rutgers University specifically because I was inspired by Nintendo’s game design philosophies.”**

“As a 3D animator, I’m generally expected to be able to create realistic images in a digital environment. The costumes were an inversion of that. I wanted to share a space with the characters and worlds of older Nintendo games, and I wanted to have that bit of nostalgia suddenly step unexpectedly into the lives of others, too.”

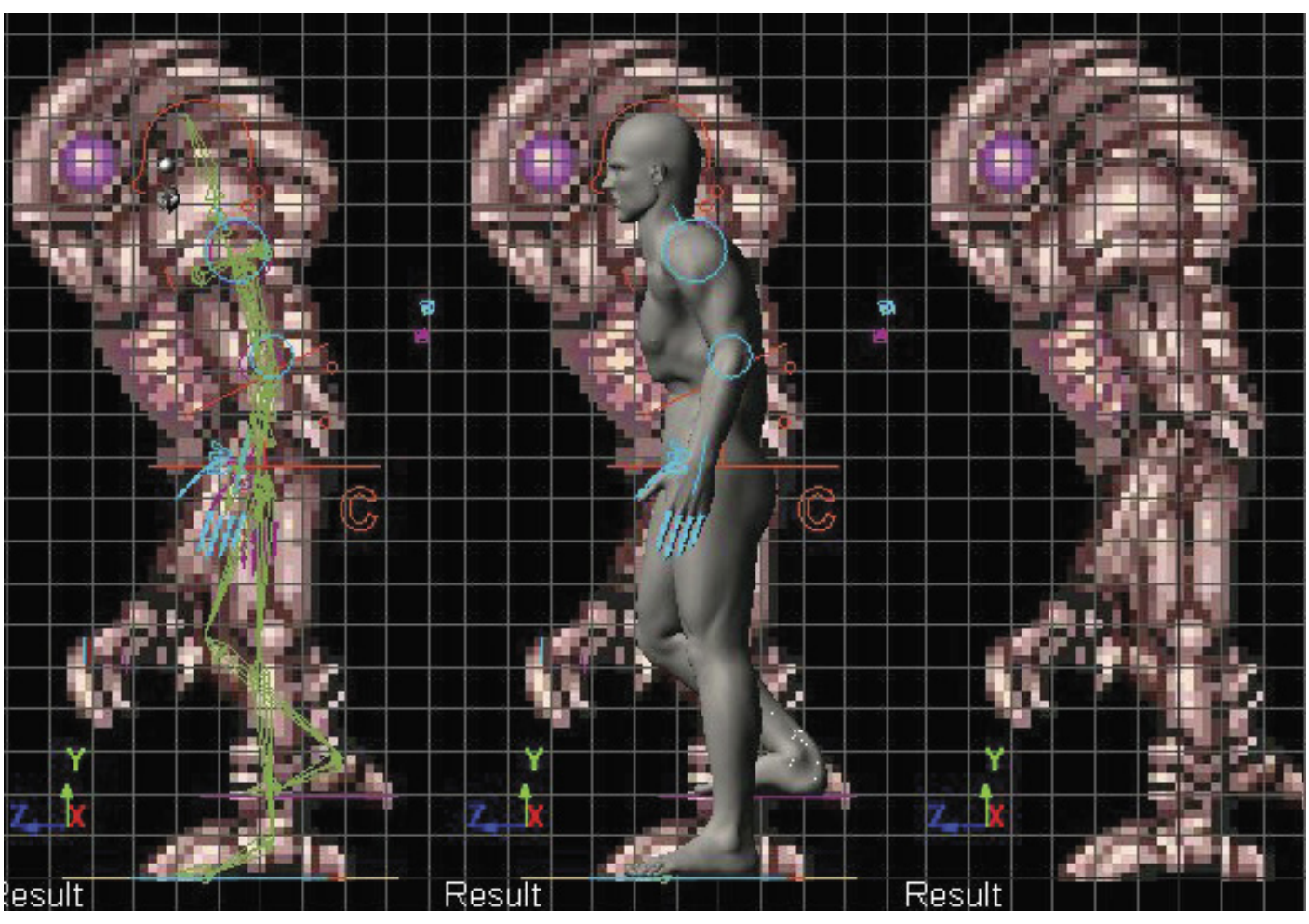


“Samus and Chozo Statue CosPIX” | Acrylic on Cardboard | Photos by Dawn Cattell

Much of Cattell’s work is a feat of engineering as well as art. “I begin by researching the art and characters of games, and how the limbs and pieces of the characters that I am considering move. I then create proportions studies to make sure that the human limb joints will match up to how the character’s pieces rotate. This step also ensures that the costumer is sufficiently hidden behind the 2D costume.”

This process requires determining the exact pixel-to-inch ratio in order to set the scale. He then draws out grids to that scale, and cuts materials prior to painting, ensuring the backside of each piece is black. “The costumer wears all black, like a stagehand, and the pieces are strapped on in a way that make a sandwich of them and of each segment of their limbs,” Cattell continued. “The result is a costume that becomes two-dimensional when viewed from either side and vanishes when viewed from the front.”

Cattell’s work has received official recognition from Nintendo; his first two ensembles were featured in *Nintendo Power*. In the callout, the editor mentioned wanting to see him bring to life *Super Metroid*’s Ridley. And so Cattell did. “I submitted their article to Rutgers for a sculpture research grant and they paid for the materials for my 10-foot behemoth, designed to-scale with Samus.” Ridley also made it into the community column of the magazine.



Chozo Proportions Study

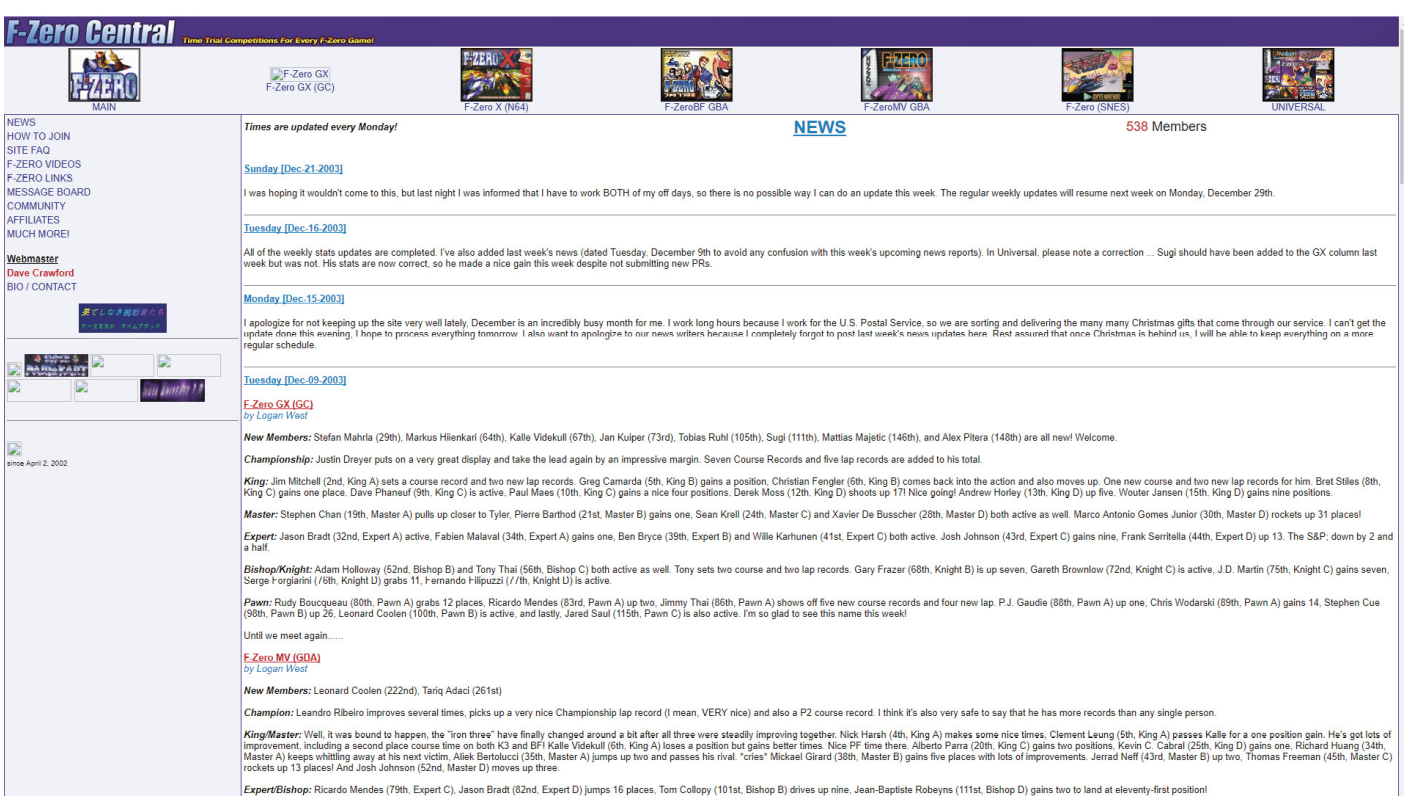
“My personal style boils down to creatively reinterpreting the world through my personal interests. Pixel ‘sculpture’ has become my identifiable artist brand ever since inventing the costumes in 2010. I love animation and illusions and gaming, so they just happened to meld together in my mind this way. The concept is the art of it.”

“Ridley CosPIX” | Acrylic on Canvas, Coroplast | Photo by Kyle Payne

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Fansite Spotlight: F-Zero Central



2003

Years Online: 16

@Fzerocentral| Facebook.com/fzerocentral | Fzerocentral.org

> **“The site has evolved a couple of times in terms of its design, but it’s primarily always been a site where people can submit their best Time Attack records, which naturally has fostered a very competitively focused community.”**

In the spirit of the franchise it pays tribute to, fansite *F-Zero Central* focuses on friendly, but fierce, competition among the globe’s most dedicated racers.

“*F-Zero Central* was founded in 2001 by Dave Crawford. Initially, the site just focused on the just-released *F-Zero Maximum Velocity* for the Game Boy Advance, to create a place where players could compare their best times. There was a lot of interest and the site quickly grew with the addition of all the other *F-Zero* games,” began site staffer “WMJ.”

F-Zero Central owes a debt to fellow Nintendo title *Mario Kart*, as it followed in the footsteps of the franchise’s established community and extensive ranking sites. “Since then, we’ve always had a fairly close relationship with the *Mario Kart* community,” he continued. “Many of our community members are also members of other Nintendo communities, which I think brings together a good mix of people that all share a genuine love for these awesome games.”

“I stumbled upon *F-Zero* through my older brother who had bought *F-Zero Maximum Velocity* for his newly acquired Game Boy Advance,” reminisced fellow staff member “Yazzo.” “Once I started playing the game I was pretty much immediately hooked. The sense of speed, and the challenge of fully mastering your ship especially, made me keep playing the game—something which I think is pretty unique to the *F-Zero* series.”

“I was already familiar with submitting my best Time Attack times for a game since I was a member of the *Super Mario Kart* community, and this led me to search if there were any similar site for *F-Zero* where I could also submit my best. This is how I discovered *F-Zero Central*, and subsequently also all other *F-Zero* games in the series.”

2017

“The site has evolved a couple of times in terms of its design,” explained Yazzo. “But it’s primarily always been a site where people can submit their best Time Attack records, which naturally has fostered a very competitively focused community.” According to WMJ, *F-Zero Central* also welcomes “a community of general *F-Zero* fans that share all sorts of things about the games such as modding, music, videos, and more.”

“This has happened a lot thanks to software like Discord which allow us to bring all these *F-Zero* fans together in a much more convenient and efficient way than ever before,” said Yazzo, picking up the thread. “In my experience the larger Nintendo community generally consists of lots of positive and friendly people who are very passionate about what they like, and are also socially very easy and fun to interact with. That’s probably the main reason as to why I’m still involved in the *F-Zero Central* community to this day.”

The *F-Zero* team hosts formal in-person meet-ups with fellow fans when possible, but sometimes opportunities arise at unexpected times. “Two fellow Dutch gamers, ‘KVD’ and Michael Jongerius, contacted me out of the blue because they wanted to learn about *F-Zero X* and they saw I was a highly ranked Dutch player,” said WMJ. “The Netherlands is a very small country, so they came over one weekend and we had a great time,” he continued, speaking to a meeting nearly ten years ago. “At the time KVD was one of the best players of *Super Mario Kart*, and Michael Jongerius of *Mario Kart 64*. We had a fantastic time hanging out and both are still good friends.” KVD and WMJ went on to be house mates for some time, united by their love of Nintendo and need for speed.

Yazzo has represented *F-Zero* to the wider gaming community, attending and performing in the 2015 Awesome Games Done Quick charity marathon. “I got to meet a few *F-Zero* pilots in real life, which was a very cool experience. A member of the community called ‘Naegleria’ hosted an open competition in *F-Zero GX*, where the goal was to beat Story Mode Chapter 5 on the ‘Very Hard’ difficulty level. I was fortunate enough to be able to achieve that goal while at the event, which I will always truly cherish as one of the great moments of my life.”

SUPER NOSTALGIA: F-ZERO

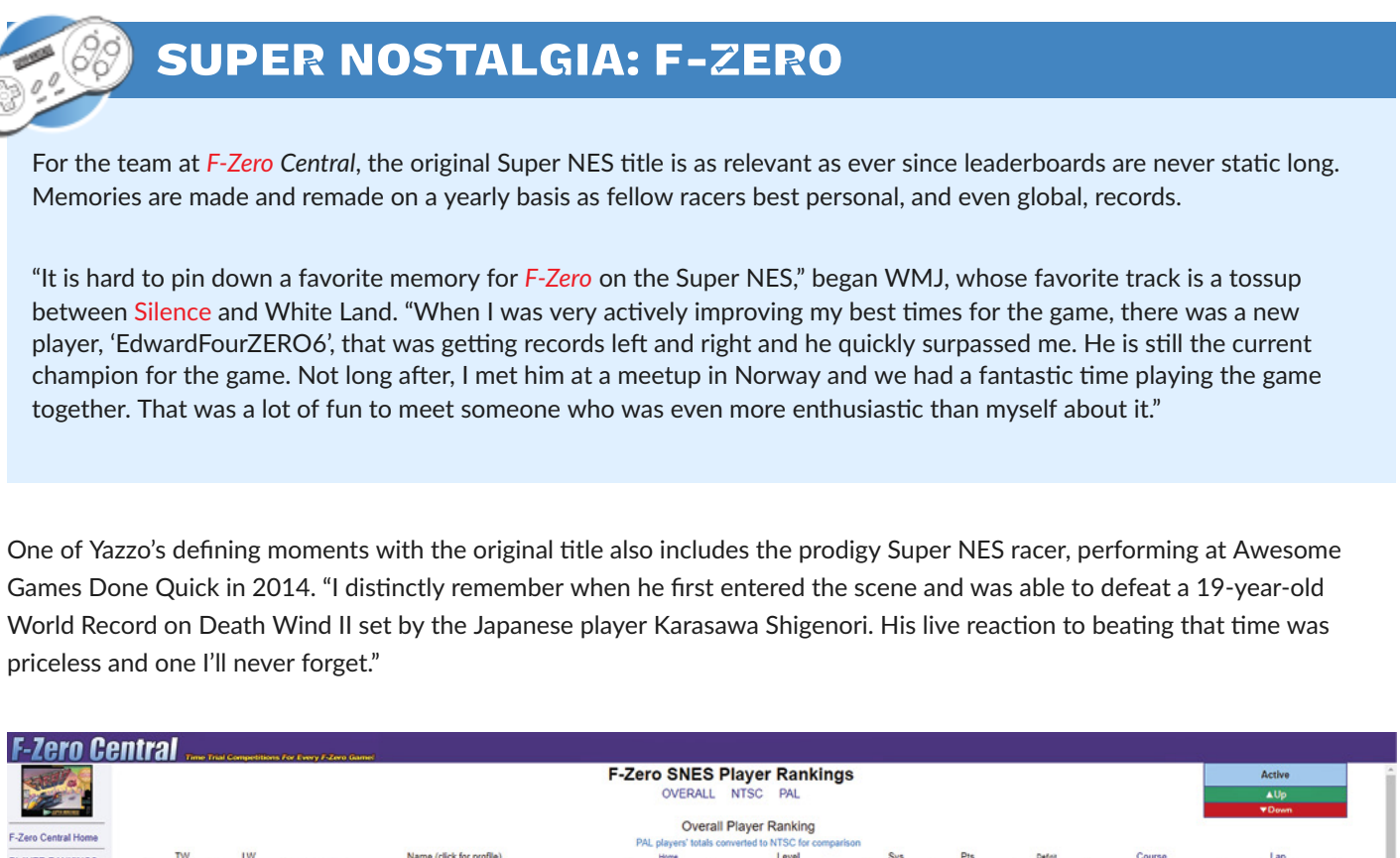
For the team at *F-Zero Central*, the original Super NES title is as relevant as ever since leaderboards are never static long. Memories are made and remade on a yearly basis as fellow racers best personal, and even global, records.

“It is hard to pin down a favorite memory for *F-Zero* on the Super NES,” began WMJ, whose favorite track is a tossup between Silence and White Land. “When I was very actively improving my best times for the game, there was a new player, ‘EdwardFourZERO6’, that was getting records left and right and he quickly surpassed me. He is still the current champion for the game. Not long after, I met him at a meetup in Norway and we had a fantastic time playing the game together. That was a lot of fun to meet someone who was even more enthusiastic than myself about it.”

One of Yazzo’s defining moments with the original title also includes the prodigy Super NES racer, performing at Awesome Games Done Quick in 2014. “I distinctly remember when he first entered the scene and was able to defeat a 19-year-old World Record on Death Wind II set by the Japanese player Karasawa Shigenori. His live reaction to beating that time was priceless and one I’ll never forget.”

F-Zero Central leaderboards, 2003

Yazzo played against EdwardFourZERO6 himself next year at the same event. “Although I lost the race, I was still happy to be able to set a time within just 10 seconds of my personal best, and keep it a fairly close race as well. I also managed to somehow set a new personal best on Fire Field”—his personal favorite track—“to close out the run.”



F-Zero Central leaderboards, 2017

F-Zero continues to impact fans to this day, both those who play and replay the classic, and those who enjoy racing games as a whole. “The specific genre of futuristic high speed racing games all have their foundations in *F-Zero* on the Super NES,” said WMJ. “Fast paced, highly challenging racing is really a unique feature it brought forth that the Super NES hardware was first capable of producing.”

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Zoki64

“Super Mario World SNES” | Custom Console

Country: Slovenia

@Zoki_64 | Zoki64.deviantart.com

> **“I always loved Nintendo’s ’80s and ’90s art on video game boxes and in their manuals.”**

“I always loved Nintendo’s ’80s and ’90s art on video game boxes and in their manuals. I wanted to make custom consoles based on the most popular games from various console generations, and *Super Mario World* is one of the games that was a must, as I played it a lot when I was a child. I had the design in my mind for years before I got the chance to finally paint it.”

PRIMA GAMES

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Ted Graves

"Star Fox" | Digital Art

Country: United States

@TedGravesArt | Tedgraves.art

> **"This piece was inspired by my many fond memories of being absorbed in this fantastic game."**

"This piece was inspired by my many fond memories of being absorbed in this fantastic game. When the first *Star Fox* came out, it was the first truly 3D game I ever saw. Its visuals and story grabbed my imagination, and the comic in *Nintendo Power* deepened my interest. I wanted to paint something that captured the intricate detail and excitement of the *Star Fox* universe the way I saw it when I was a kid!"

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Li Kovacs

“A Link to the Past”

Country: United States | @Likovacs | Facebook.com/likovacs.offcial

Photographer: Likovacs.com

> **“Link is my favorite character of all time, and I have always loved the story of The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past.**

“Link is my favorite character of all time, and I have always loved the story of *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past*. For me this game first brought me deeper into the land of Hyrule through its more immersive story telling. The way the game started with the story of Link and his Uncle really throws you into the adventure. I remember how much more detailed the 16-bit graphics were, and how a young me felt like I was there with Link.”

@Metroidmetal | Facebook.com/metroidmetal | Metroidmetal.com

> **"I wanted to take melodies completely familiar to fans but add songwriting elements and create something new."**

Metroid Metal was brought to life in 2003 by longtime musician Grant Henry, known by his stage name Stemage. The tribute band began as a solo endeavor; Henry played all the instruments and programmed drums using an analog cassette 8-track. What resulted from his unaccompanied jam sessions was an original, high-octane, heavy metal tribute to *Metroid* on the NES.

"Nostalgia frequently draws us to old game soundtracks. But hearing it again later after becoming a musician, the *Metroid* soundtrack is objectively one of a kind, and the same applies to *Super Metroid*," explained Henry. "Many *Metroid* songs carry a sense of unease, but others are filled with resolve, adventure, and victory. It's an interesting combination of tension and release which goes right along with some of my favorite types of heavy, guitar-driven music. This more than anything drew me to the *Metroid* OSTs."

Photo by Adam Lyon

"His versatility is incredible," Henry said, praising franchise composer Kenji Yamamoto. "If you tell people that the same composer tackled both *Super Metroid*'s Maridia and *Punch Out!!*, they're always surprised. I only wish he could have contributed to more soundtracks in the early Nintendo years. I am thrilled that he's been able to work on later *Metroid* games though. He knows that sound. He is that sound."

Metroid's music has the added benefit of boasting "defined melodies and motifs" while remaining sparse enough for interpretation. "This makes it perfect for keeping the themes intact while creating something completely different underneath. That was the goal of the Metroid Metal arrangements. I wanted to take melodies completely familiar to fans but add songwriting elements and create something new. I've done plenty of straight covers over the years, but Metroid Metal is anything but."

Photo by Adam Lyon

Intending to move on to other classic console games after his debut digital collection, Henry couldn't escape *Metroid*'s draw. He doubled down on Samus' adventures, moving on to arrange the *Super Metroid* tribute song "Lower Norfair."

"The NES has many classic soundtracks, but *Super Metroid* was able to do more with instruments, textures, ambience, and layers," Henry continued. "Jazzy soundtracks like *Pilotwings* I would just leave on loop. *Castlevania IV*, *Donkey Kong Country*, *Super Mario Kart*—their soundtracks could have existed on the NES in scaled down form, but it wouldn't have been the same. On Super Nintendo, things got more cinematic and interesting, and this was around the same time I started listening to more complex types of music anyway. The timing was perfect."

After success in his solo act, Metroid Metal began to evolve toward its final form—a full-fledged band amped up for live performances. Henry brought other talent into the fold: Dan "Chunkstyle" Taylor on the bass, Kevin "Cheddar" Lawrence on drums, and both Dan "Danimal" Behrens and Michael "Kirby" Molnar joining Henry on guitar. The new team debuted "Metroid Metal Live" on January 3, 2009, at MAGfest 7, and note their following PAX 2009 performance as where they gained incredible momentum. Their live performances went on to inspire a new album called *Varia Suite*.

"The attention over the years has been amazing," recalled Henry. "I started doing arrangements early on when the VGM remix scene was not as thriving. I was influenced by a handful of bands doing something similar, but that was it. Now, hundreds of bands apply to conventions every year. YouTube covers are commonplace, and the scene could almost be considered crowded. I'm grateful to have started this a bit earlier on and that people have been accepting to my somewhat unconventional arrangements. The live shows have been a blast."

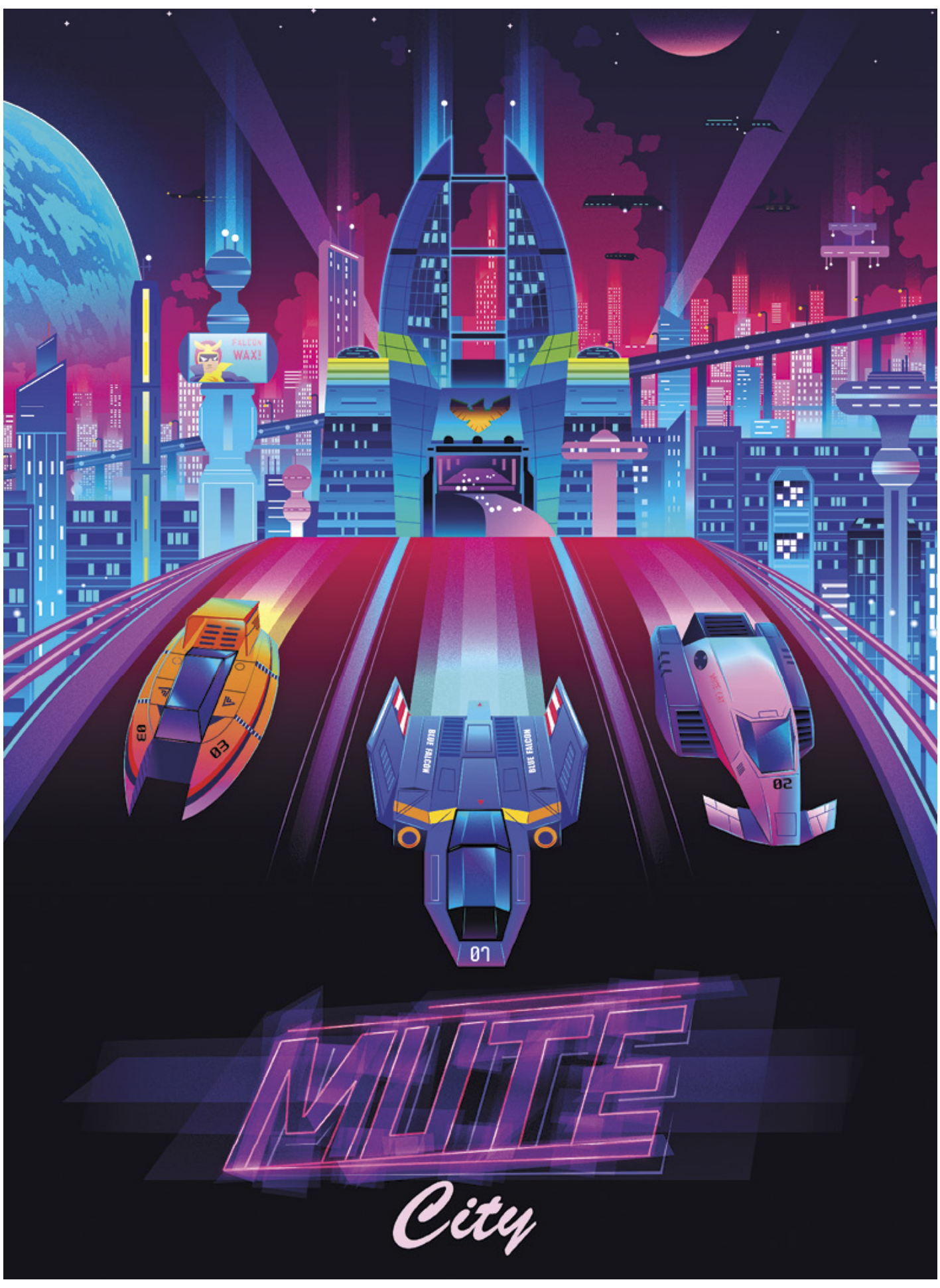
According to Henry, Metroid Metal hasn't gone unnoticed by Nintendo. "I heard from Retro over email during *Metroid Prime 3* development, showing their love for the project. We actually had a member of the dev team from *Metroid Prime Hunters* come up to the booth at PAX. I have a picture of Hip Tanaka holding his copy of the *Varia Suite* album. It's a shock, but feels good."

"*Super Metroid* perfected a formula that would later influence a mountain of games," concluded Henry, taking a step back to reflect on the game as a whole. "It played great, but the story twists were also huge. Unlike many RPGs at the time that had good stories, you were always alone in *Super Metroid*. That helped it have more of an impact. It was your story. It's no wonder that *Super Metroid* remains many people's favorite game of all time."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Artist Spotlight: Josue Martinez



Country: United States

Medium of Art: Digital

@Josh_mrtz | Jmardesigns.deviantart.com

Artist Josue Martinez started “doodling” at the age of 12, and over the past 15 years has found his style in crisp vector-inspired visuals. Modern and commercial art are his two biggest inspirations, which frequently manifest in tributes to his childhood.

“I either try to depict one of my favorite moments in the game, or try to include as much about the game as possible into the image,” detailed Martinez. “I reference screenshots of the game and stock images for certain poses. I’m not a fan of drawing characters in their most popular poses or directly copying official game art. Even if it’s fan art I do my best to make it my own.”

His unique visual touch has lent itself well to a variety of slick Super NES-inspired pieces, including homages to *Star Fox* and *F-Zero*.

“For this one I took cues mostly from art deco posters and colors from 1980s graphic design,” said Martinez, speaking to the creation of “Big Blue”, which complements a second piece called “Mute City”. I also wanted to use gradients to make the vehicles look shiny.” For the *Star Fox* ensemble, “I was mainly inspired by modern Japanese designs of animals and clean vector graphics, so the aim was to simplify the designs of the *Star Fox* crew.”

Music seems to be the recurring theme in Martinez’s work, which gets him in the right headspace to capture a game’s nostalgia. “When I create something based off a game I usually have that game’s soundtrack on repeat.”

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Fansite Spotlight: Starmen.Net

Years Online: 18

@Starmennet | Facebook.com/starmennet | Starmen.net

Starmen.Net, originally hosted at *EarthBound.net*, was established in 1999 by site founders Clyde Mandelin and Reid Young. "It was created to be a large, central *EarthBound* site to help raise the level of quality of *EarthBound*-related content on the Internet," began Brian Jaworski, known as "ShadowX", a staff member since 2001. "Since then, *Starmen.Net* has grown into a self-perpetuating community, full of fun and talented individuals that all enjoy the celebration of the *Mother*/*EarthBound* series."

"It was part of a shared effort to unite multiple *EarthBound* fansites into one collective website," elaborated Christopher Warriner (user name "KingDarian"), a staff member since 2005. "*EarthBound* is kind of an off-beat game that has a way of bringing a specific group of people who it clicks with together, and *Starmen.Net* was a huge cornerstone for the online *EarthBound* community."

"*Starmen.Net*'s community consists mainly of people drawn together by that certain something that *EarthBound* has," he continued. Either they played the game as a kid in the '90s, or they heard about Ness through the *Super Smash Bros.* series and they wanted to know more. Our community loves to create fanart and other fan created media, participate in annual playthroughs of *EarthBound*, share and discuss any news that crops up about the series, and generally keep the fire burning for *EarthBound*."

One of the unique things that unites the *EarthBound* fandom—and the Starmen.Net community in particular—is showing their unrelenting love for the franchise through…petitions; the *EarthBound* community is as organized as they are passionate.

With origins as a JRPG series, not all of the *EarthBound* iterations have made it state-side. The first organized campaign sought to bring *MOTHER* to the Game Boy Color. The petition received over 1000 signatures—impressive in 1999—and was featured in *IGN*'s mailbag. "To us at the time this kind of response was huge and made us all feel like we were part of something, a truly unique and vibrant fan community," recalled Jaworski. The calls to action continued over the years; the petition to localize *Mother 3* garnered 30,000 signatures, and Nintendo even playfully included a fan asking for the game in their Digital Event from E3 2014.

The *Starmen.Net* team has had interactions with Nintendo outside the rallying cries for their beloved series, according to Jaworski. "In July of 2007 a few of us were invited to the Nintendo Headquarters in Redmond, WA, to meet some great folks from *NintendoPower*. We brought a bunch of copies of our latest project, the *EarthBound Anthology*, to give to our gracious hosts. We also brought with us a beautifully sculpted Final Starman figurine and around 150 pieces of envelope art. Needless to say they thought it was pretty cool, as did we for getting the chance to be there." The team's visit was mentioned in Volume 220 of *Nintendo Power*.

Whenever possible, the *Starmen.Net* community tries to take things offline. "Every summer a large portion of the site staff and community would get together and share a destination vacation somewhere in the heart of EagleLand," continued Jaworski. "Some of my favorite moments and stories are from these yearly trips. Most contain a plethora of in-jokes, campfire stories, or tales of getting stuck in an elevator at the Sunsphere. Over time, some community members have even married and started families."

"My favorite *EarthBound* memories are of playing the game surrounded by friends I made through *Starmen.Net*," said Warriner. "It transcends being just a game to me. I've met many amazing people because of *EarthBound*. I don't think any *EarthBound* memory will ever top the experience at Camp Fangamer 2015, which was the first major public gathering of *EarthBound* fans." Camp Fangamer, organized by Fangamer staff as well as volunteers from *Starmen.net* and the *EarthBound* community, spanned several days and consisted of many activities, including a brief keynote from *EarthBound* creator Shigesato Itoi, game playthroughs, a live tribute band, a museum of *EarthBound* merchandise, arts and crafts, cosplay, and more. "It was inspiring seeing such a large group of fans come together in one place to celebrate the game. Everyone seemed to have an amazing time when gathered with fellow *EarthBound* fans. The title of the credits song of the game, 'Smiles and Tears,' sums it up perfectly."

"There is something magical about sharing the experience with a group of people," said Jaworski. "Discussing aspects of the game or discovering things you never knew or thought about before was always a joy. Everyone experiences *EarthBound* differently and it's fun to hear someone else's view on things like Pokey's motives, or, why Mach Pizza never has any medium pies. Things like this extend the play experience."

SUPER NOSTALGIA: EARTHBOUND

"Nintendo Power was my source of video game news, so this is where I had heard about it first," began Jaworski, speaking to his first contact with the series. "This was issue #70, which had a small preview of the game. Issue #73 had a large spread, and was very awe inspiring. I remember looking over those pages so much that they started falling out. I was already settled on getting this the day it came out, but the coupon that arrived in the mail sent out by Nintendo to NP subscribers further sealed the deal."

Reminiscing on favorite characters, he explained that "Ness stands out not because he is the silent protagonist, but because you can project your own self onto him and make his journey your own. You start out as a boy from a small town and end up saving the world with friends you meet along the way, and what's not to like about that?"

"You have to call mom every now and then to cure homesickness because as strong as you become, you can't save the world on your own," said Warriner, touching on the subjects that have endeared so many to the series. "The support of family and friends is a powerful theme from the start of your journey, when your mom says it's okay to go investigate a noise in the middle of the night, to the final battle where everyone's thoughts and prayers give you the power to persevere through the cold darkness of a pure evil entity. Other subtle themes like faith, through Paula's prayer command, or the bond between Jeff and his adoring friend Tony, touch upon topics rarely seen in a Nintendo game up to that point."

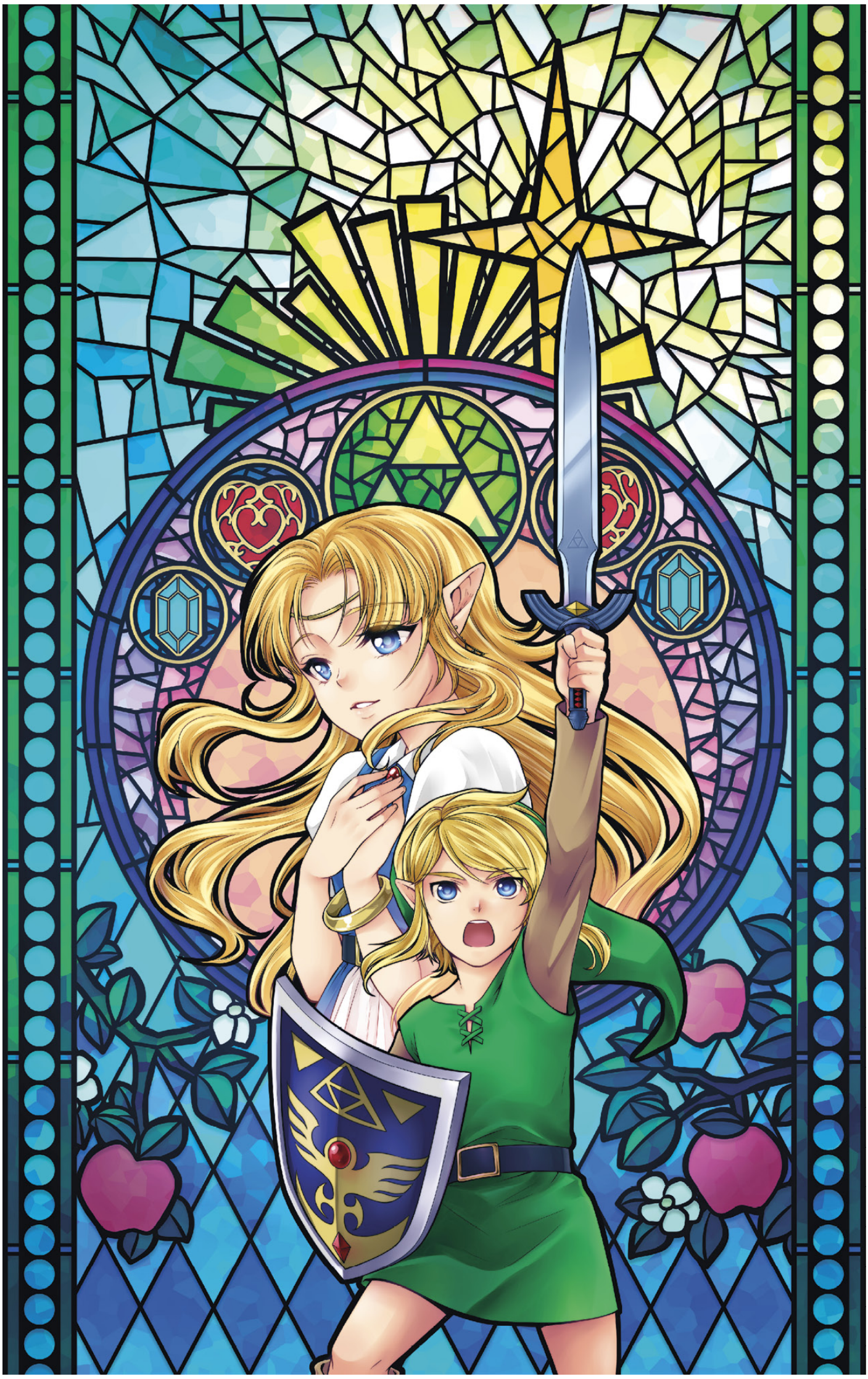
"*EarthBound*'s main narrative theme primary deals with friendship, as well as the kindness people are capable of giving one another," confirmed Jaworski. "Throughout the journey you come across your core party members and a wide cast of characters. Each has their own unique way of needing your help, or providing it to you."

"It has taken some time, but I think we are finally starting to see the effects of *EarthBound* and the community that surrounds it in the gaming industry at large," concluded Warriner. "Many people who are now developing for the Indie Games scene are applying their own experiences with *EarthBound* into the creation of their works. You can look at games like *Undertale*, *YIIK*, *Knuckle Sandwich*, and *Boot Hill Heroes* and really see how someone's personal experience with *EarthBound* drip into their creation. It's hard to deny that there was something magical about this game that you can't shake its quirky yet charming influence."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

PrinceOfRedroses



“Become A Hero”| Digital Art

Country: Thailand

@Kei_R_Kenway | Princeofredroses.deviantart.com

“*The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* is the best JRPG ever. I love the graphics in particular; the cool 16-bit art still looks great by today’s standards. For this piece, I also drew inspiration from the ability to merge into walls from *A Link Between Worlds*. Stained glass always tells a story, and the color is so beautiful and vivid, so it suited my style well.”

Super Fans

Artist Spotlight: Tsurera

Country: United States

Medium of Art: Clay Crafts

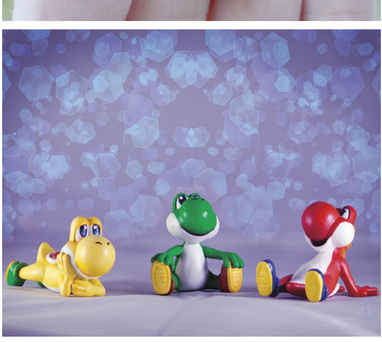
@Creative_Tsurera | CreativeTsurera.com

> "I wanted something that was absolutely nerdy, but in a way that only other nerds might catch."

US artist Tsurera uses a short list of supplies in her creative works; her talent is an ability to rework these materials in an infinite number of applications. Clay, resin, and acrylic paints are combined into wearable art featuring her favorite Nintendo games, primarily *Super Mario World*.

Small, detail-oriented pieces are where Tsurera excels, as well as her ability to translate 2D images into 3D objects. "I started teaching myself to sculpt about 10 years ago," she began. "I've painted and doodled throughout most of my life, although not very well. I also took a few art and sculpture classes in school. When I was a kid I'd make small sculpted creatures out of Play-Doh, so I've kind of been sculpting on and off for a long time now."

Her first attempt at serious sculpting came with a two-inch Yoshi tribute, made out of polymer clay. "Nintendo games make me happy, and I wanted to express that through my work. To capture the vibe of *Super Mario World*, I tried to pick out the most prominent things I get from the game, which for me were bright colors and cute characters."



Since then, much of her work has become wearable, including a simple-but-stunning *Super Mario World* "World 1-1" cameo. To round out her wardrobe, a series of earrings from the game required an even steadier hand. "I wanted to bring some of its critters to life, and what better way than to make them jewelry? I also enjoy the challenge of making small but detailed sculpts, as these are all tiny."

Some of Tsurera's art is intentionally understated, as a sign to fellow fans. "I wanted something that was absolutely nerdy, but in a way that only other nerds might catch."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Fansite Spotlight: StarFox-Online

Years Online: 13

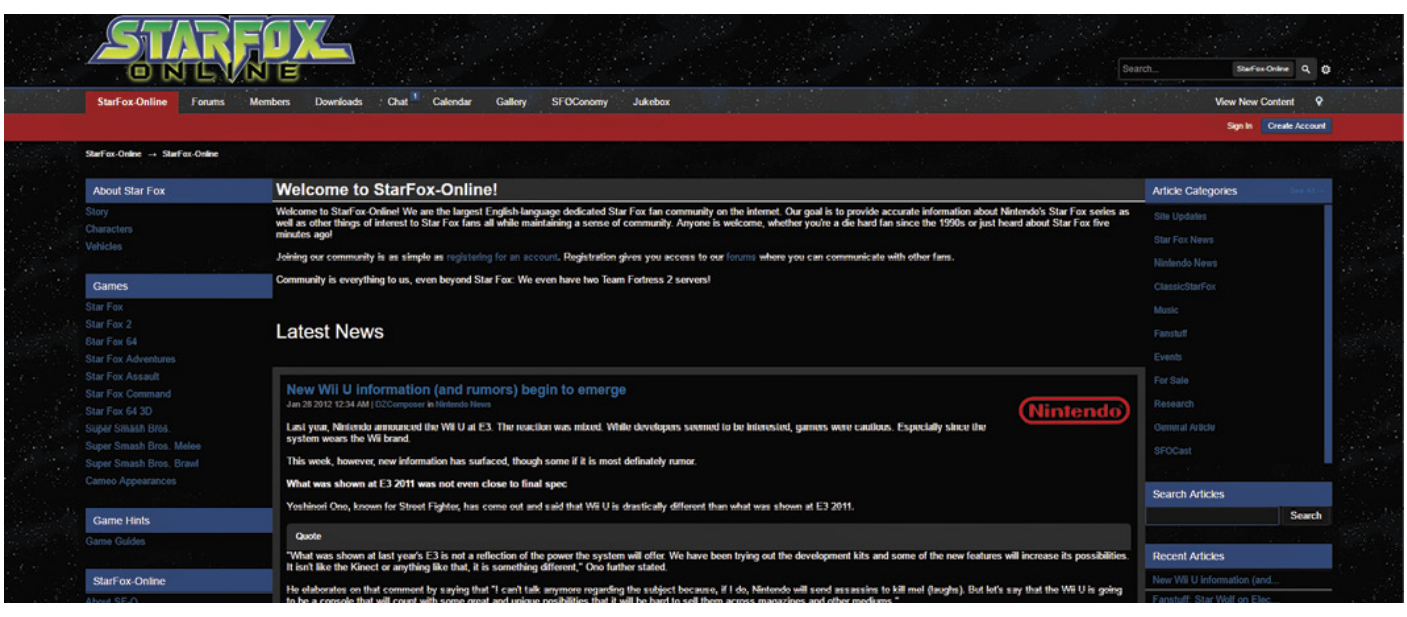
@StarFox_Online | Starfox-online.net

Although it existed in some form since 2004, *StarFox-Online* was given new life in 2006 by two community members, "DZComposer" and "Mr. Krystal". "*StarFox-Online* was intended as a place to aggregate information about the *Star Fox* series, and as somewhere where fans could share art and stories as well as participate in discussion and roleplay involving the *Star Fox* universe," explained site administrator "Sawtooth".

Although the focus on the site always remains on Fox and his adventures, creating a home for fans is a secondary priority according to moderator "OneUnder". "*StarFox Online* strives to be a community organized around a mutual enjoyment of the *Star Fox* games and universe, but not strictly limited to them. The forums reflect this. *Star Fox* topics are always open for discussion, but more general ones on various video games, films, pop-culture phenomena, and current events, among other topics, are welcome. The site tends to see a rise in membership around the release of a new *Star Fox* game or an otherwise significant update to the series, and the members that stick around for a while tend to be close. As time has passed, *StarFox-Online* has gained members, moved servers to be able to host larger amounts of content, and has started to feature notable fan works."

> **"Our fansite is like a family at this point."**

"Our fansite is like a family at this point," affirms forum administrator "Dr. Orange". "It's really hard to describe this for me since I've been here for so long it just feels like a second home. We get together and talk or have fun and support each other and laugh with one another. And while over the years our site's design changes and games come and go, that's been the constant trait of *StarFox-Online* over these past years."



2012

Some of the community has become literal family; at one point the admin team consisted of two married couples. Sawtooth explained that their unique, accepting spirit has helped many of the community find their voice in the world. "Some of my most dependable and longest term friends I've met through this site, people I've talked to every day, or at least every other day, for upwards of five years. For me—I grew up on the site and as a sheltered middle class kid—it opened my eyes to what different kinds of people were out there and how they thought and acted. It also gave me an anonymous social outlet where I felt free to be myself and not have to change or hide my personality to fit within what I perceived as the norm, for better or for worse. This allowed me to grow into my own person, and I can credit *StarFox-Online* with giving me a lot of the confidence I needed to become who I am today."

OneUnder mirrored the same sentiment. "Being able to immerse myself into the events and atmosphere of the games through discussions in the community worked wonders for assisting me through difficult times."

2017

To keep up with the changing Internet landscape, the site has adapted. "Message boards as a format are having to evolve to survive, since the notion of what social media means has changed so significantly in the past few years," explained Sawtooth. "As such, we've added a live chat feature to the site, and have expanded to a Discord server, where we have to have a separate moderation team due to the pretty high level of activity. We're also trying to build out our editorial content and provide new and interesting articles, as well as archiving content related to the series. I'm really excited to see what we can do to grow the site and be a better home for the *Star Fox* community."

The team was universally ecstatic about recent events in the fandom. "I was absolutely floored," recounted Sawtooth, speaking to the announcement of *Star Fox 2*'s inclusion on the Super NES Classic. "I think the release of *Star Fox 2* on the Super NES Classic will really revive people's interest in the series."

"To think that we'll finally get to play the game, and see two characters that didn't make appearances in any other *Star Fox* games to boot, is truly awesome," echoed OneUnder. "It's not every day that you get to play a game that was canceled over two decades ago, after all, let alone a *Star Fox* game!"

SUPER NOSTALGIA: STAR FOX

The *StarFox Online* team trends young, and the majority of them were introduced to the franchise via *Star Fox* on the 64. That doesn't mean they find the Super NES classic any less impressive, though.

"My first experiences with *Star Fox* came when *Star Fox 64* was released," recalled staffer "Sideways." "I only recently came into a copy of *Star Fox* for Super NES and a system to use it. I had been missing out."

"I'll never forget booting up the game for the first time and just looking at it," remembered OneUnder, picking up the thread. "The visual style, comprised primarily of angular polygons and accent colors, was like nothing I had seen before, and more or less like nothing I've seen since. The sensation of piloting your own craft throughout the vast, and potentially dangerous, territories of the nearly endless void that is space is beautifully realized in this graphical style, and it still stands out as compared to the rest of the Super NES library, and 3D games that have been released since."

"Rail shooters everywhere take inspiration from *Star Fox*," agreed fellow team member "Faye". "It is easily one of the best railshooters of its time, and regularly makes top 10 lists all over the Internet."

"Super NES *Star Fox* really showed me what innovation in software and hardware could do," continued Sawtooth. "Packing the Super FX expansion chip onto the cartridge allowed the Super NES to pull off what people at the time thought impossible, 3D polygonal graphics on a home console. Of course, in a few years this would become the norm, but at the time it was some real cutting-edge stuff. Nintendo does a great job of doing incredible things with what little hardware they give themselves, and it's set a trend in their software even today. That's one of the reasons I like Nintendo so much—they refuse to just throw out how many gigaflops their console can push or how many gigabytes of RAM it has. They make the most of their hardware with rock-solid software, always have, and I hope, always will."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Thiago Almeida

"Super Metroid"| Digital Art

Country: Brazil

Thiago-almeida.deviantart.com | Behance.net/thiagoalmeida

> **"I wanted my fanart to showcase the fear of facing a giant boss in a hostile environment full of thorns."**

"I always liked *Super Metroid*, and played it a lot in my childhood. The design of Samus' armor, and that of the bosses, inspire me to draw to this day. I wanted to create a material that could express my gratitude for this title. I selected some reference pictures of Samus wearing my favorite armor and added the most intriguing boss of the game, Kraid. I remember feeling astonished to see him become a giant in the first fight—it was a unique emotion! I wanted my fanart to showcase the fear of facing a giant boss in a hostile environment full of thorns."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Artist Spotlight: Jenni Källberg

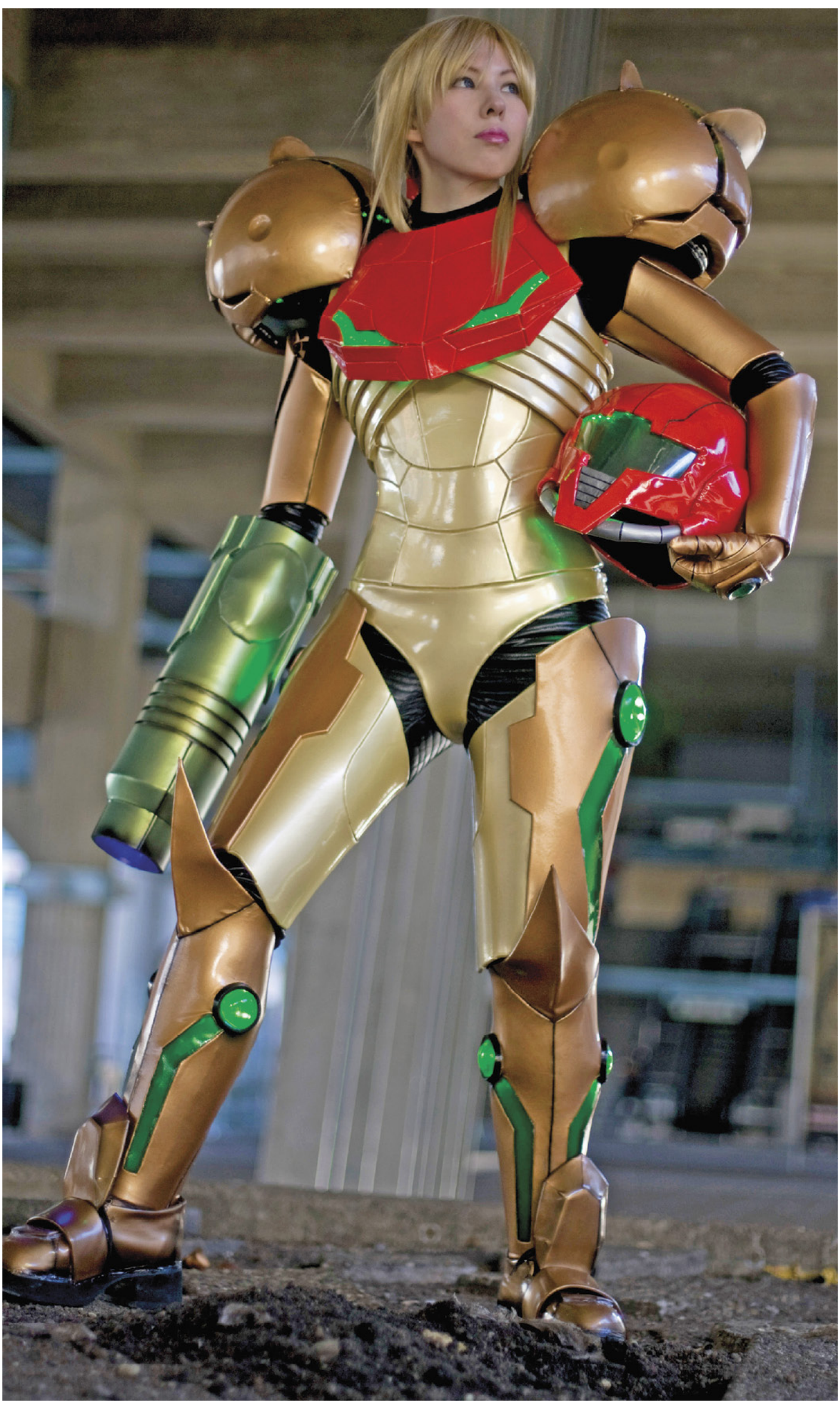


Photo by Carl Oscar Aaro | Carloscar.com

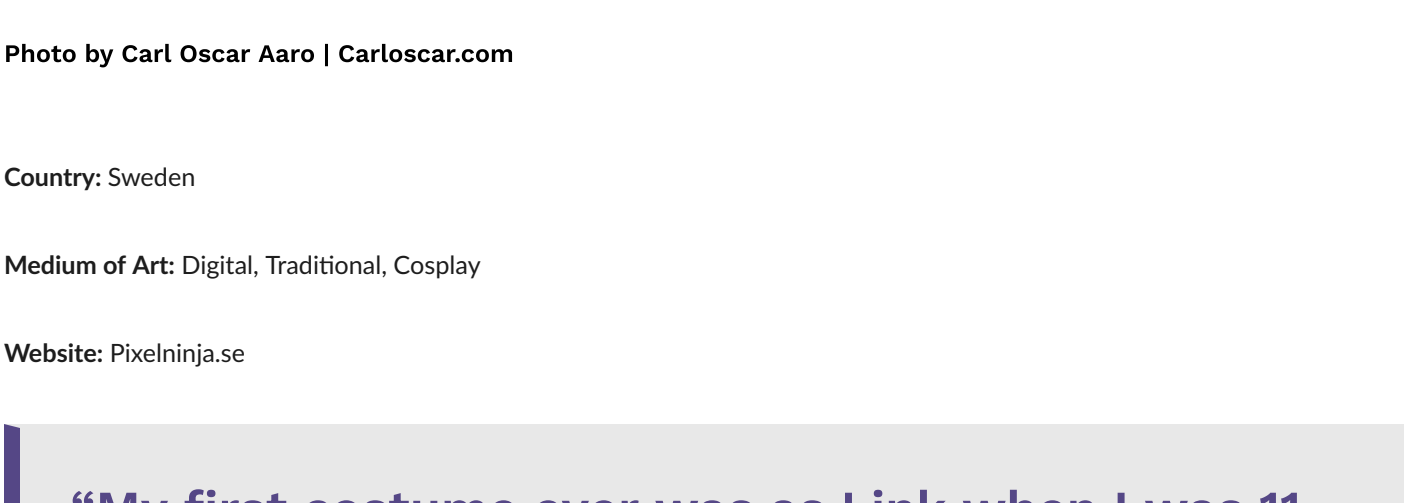
Country: Sweden

Medium of Art: Digital, Traditional, Cosplay

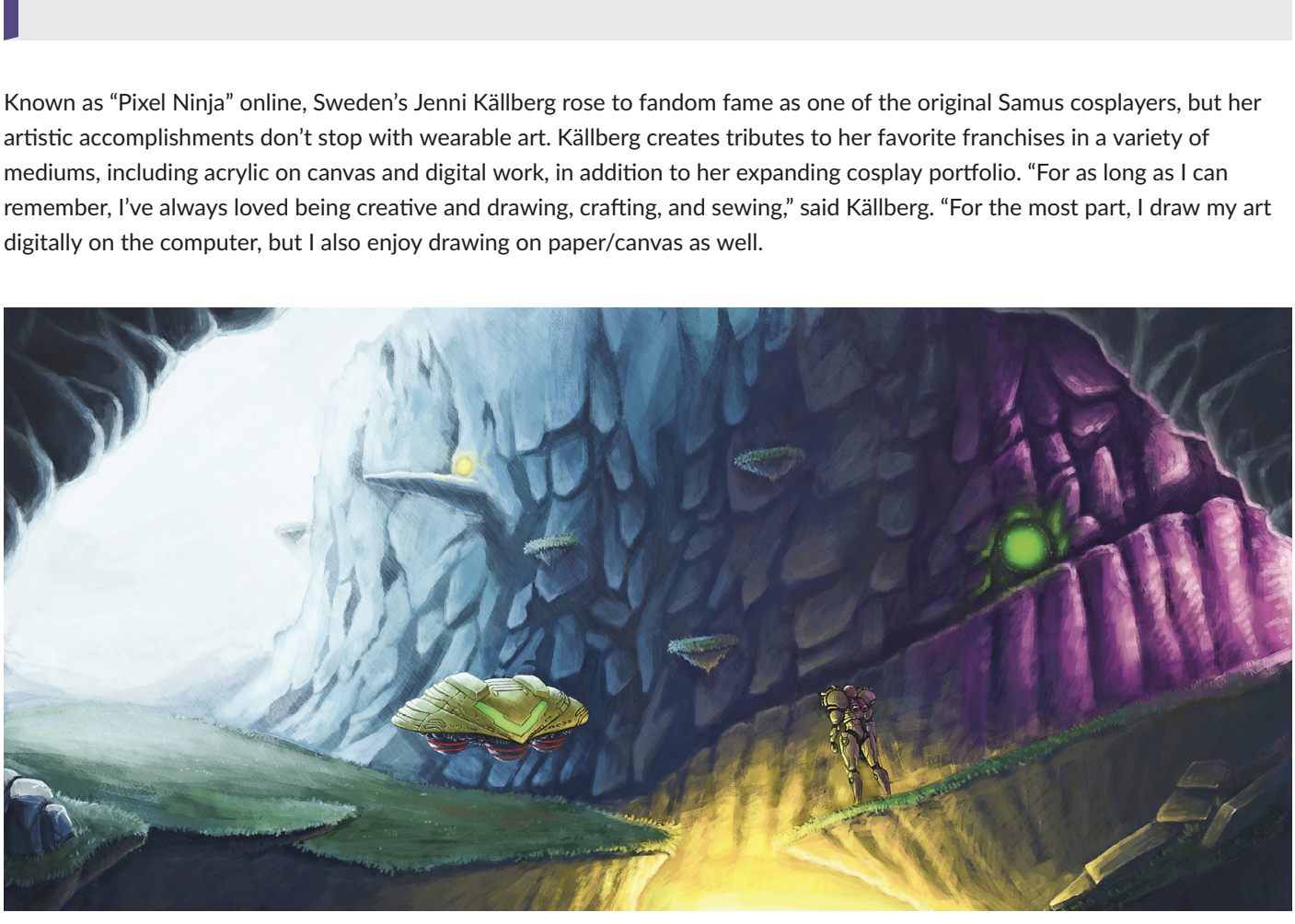
Website: Pixelninja.se

> **“My first costume ever was as Link when I was 11 years old.”**

Known as “Pixel Ninja” online, Sweden’s Jenni Källberg rose to fandom fame as one of the original Samus cosplayers, but her artistic accomplishments don’t stop with wearable art. Källberg creates tributes to her favorite franchises in a variety of mediums, including acrylic on canvas and digital work, in addition to her expanding cosplay portfolio. “For as long as I can remember, I’ve always loved being creative and drawing, crafting, and sewing,” said Källberg. “For the most part, I draw my art digitally on the computer, but I also enjoy drawing on paper/canvas as well.



Fanart has her heart, and Nintendo appears to hold a special place within it. “Even if I do draw and sew some original pieces, I mostly enjoy drawing fanart or making costumes from the things that I like. It’s a great way for me to combine my hobbies and interests.”



“My first costume ever was as Link when I was 11 years old,” explained Källberg, thinking back to her first foray into the medium. “At that time, I didn’t know about the concept of cosplay, but I dressed up as Link because Nintendo hosted a ‘dress up as your favorite Nintendo character contest’ in Sweden. I did not win, but I thought it was fun to dress up as Link, posing with a fairy bottle and sword, so when I got the chance I made more costumes. Later in sewing class at school I made several cosplay costumes instead of regular clothes, because I thought it was more fun.”

Her costume skills quickly advanced far beyond sewing. Samus’ armor seemed like the perfect costume to challenge her. “First, I made the pattern by drawing and cutting out the shapes in paper. I adjusted the size/shape on me in front of the mirror. Then I cut out the shapes in foam, which I covered in vinyl fabric to get the shiny texture. In some cases, when I could not find a vinyl fabric in the right color, I would airbrush it in the right color and cover it with clear coat so the color would not fade off, and it would be shiny. The whole costume is made of foam except for the shoulder balls which are made of polystyrene.”

Källberg has completed two Samus suit versions: the Varia and Gravity Suits. “I also installed a total of 184 LED-lights in the costumes which are powered by 20 AA batteries. The costumes took six months to complete.”

Källberg’s creative work is expanding to a new frontier. “I started to make animated pixel art a couple of months back and really enjoy it!”

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Efraim Rodríguez

“Greetings from World 5” | Digital Art

Country: Mexico

@Teartsyjess | Efraimrdz.deviantart.com

“World 5 in *Yoshi’s Island* has the best scenarios from the game. I really liked the feeling of running over the clouds, and loved the boss battle that took place on the moon!”

Artist Spotlight: Gnomo del Bosque

Country: Chile

Medium of Art: Digital

Facebook.com/GnomoArtista | Soyungnomo.deviantart.com

> **"It is truly not only my passion; it's my work and my lifestyle too."**

"I've been professionally creating art, designs, and taking classes for almost 11 years, since I was only 17 years old," began Gnomo del Bosque. "It is truly not only my passion; it's my work and my lifestyle too."

Entertainment of all sorts has fueled del Bosque's desire to create, but video games—and very specifically Nintendo titles—provide endless encouragement. She draws from a well of childhood memories when creating. "I'm inspired by love, by respect, by epicness, by fear, by happiness, and also by all the feelings that we get when we are little, but we have to hide a bit when we are adults. I embrace nostalgia, and make it my own to translate it to pure childhood in my concepts." For her *Mario Bros.* tribute, she recalls an extreme sense of adventure mixed with fear, inspired from her encounter with Bowser.

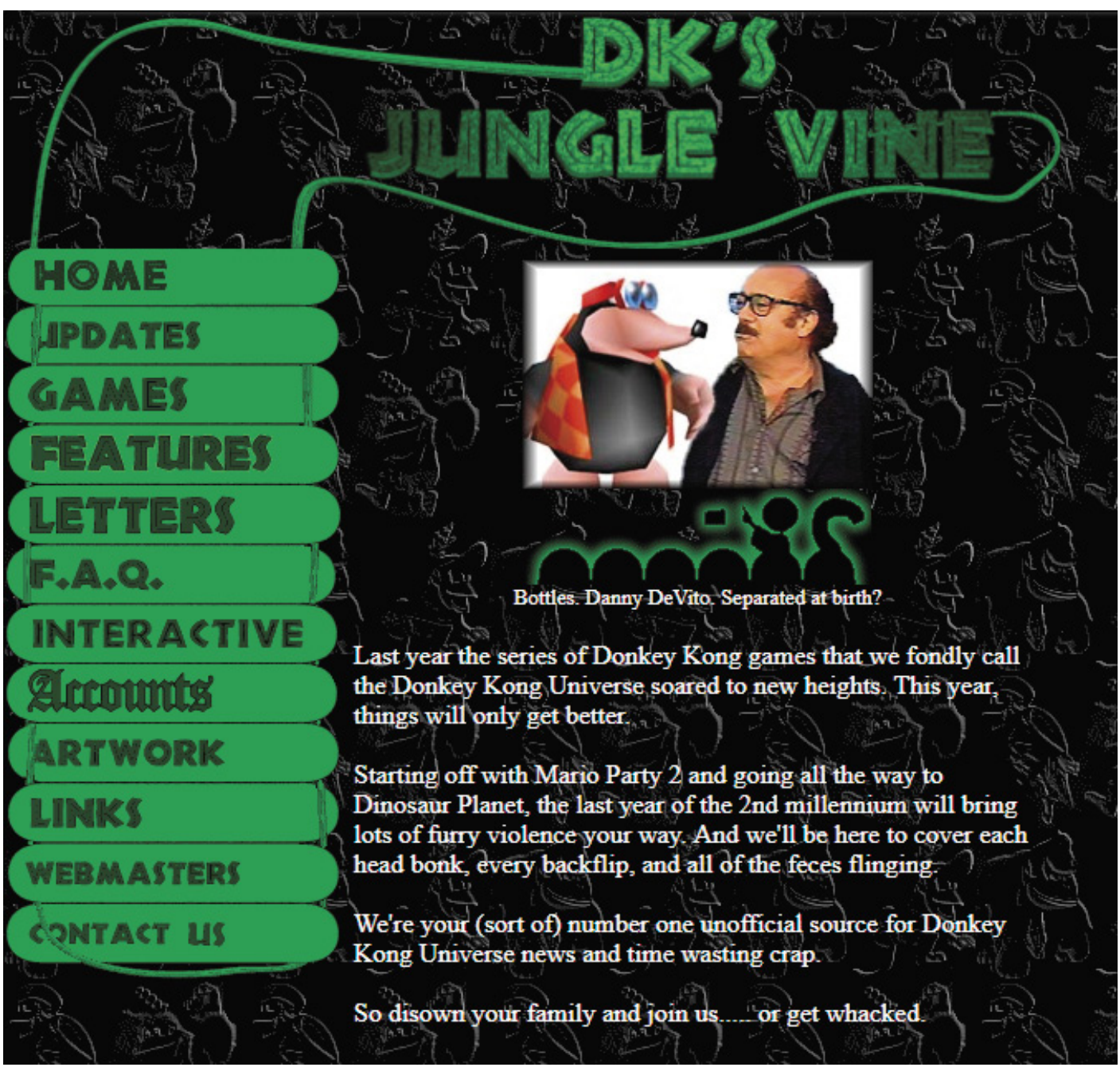
A lack of passion is a non-starter for her work. "Whenever I'm doing a new illustration, I need to love the game and characters, and be inspired by them or their story. If I don't know them or love them, I don't draw them," stated del Bosque. A series of sketches come next, before honing in on a specific draft, establishing the light, color palette, and completing the piece with some post-production.

While there may be common emotional threads in her work, "Every piece is unique," continued del Bosque. "I mix brush strokes with colorful and unique palettes together. I put western and eastern graphic styles on every work—the best of both worlds. And that's what I love to do, mix worlds."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Fansite Spotlight: DK Vine



2000

Years Online: 18

@DKvine | Facebook.com/dkvine | Dkvine.com

Fansite *DK Vine* swung onto the scene just before the turn of the century, catering to an existing fandom established by the sensational Super NES releases. "*DK Vine* was launched in August of 1999, ostensibly in anticipation of *Donkey Kong 64*'s arrival later that year," began Hyle Russell, Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *DK Vine*. "More than just that, we were created as a celebration of the shared world of Nintendo games created by Rare Ltd. that kicked off with *Donkey Kong Country* for the Super NES." Although initially created to celebrate the work of Rare Ltd., the site continued to follow DK through modern interpretations, with "The site and community experiencing something of a renaissance with the arrival of Retro Studios' two *Donkey Kong Country* revivals."

Reminiscing about the first *Country* title, Russell didn't know what to expect when he picked up the Super NES game. "Obviously the graphics were unlike anything I had ever seen, but it was reading the instruction manual before I played the game where the charm of the game's world crystallized for me. A cheeky humor was pervasive on every page, buoyed by Cranky Kong himself slagging off on the game from cover to cover. The added lore of Cranky actually being the original Donkey Kong sealed the deal for me. This wasn't your typical sidescroller, and this wasn't your standard Nintendo game. There was magic to be found in *Donkey Kong Country*!"

Current

The "cheeky humor" of *Donkey Kong Country* is the foundation upon which *DK Vine* was built. "We've always celebrated the *Donkey Kong Country* series by presenting ourselves as a pseudo-parody of fansites, displaying with humor the bizarre dedication and absurd attention to minutiae that these kind of endeavors usually adhere to. That it was all centered around a series starring an ape in a tie really helped drive that point home, and that helped create a community that never took itself too seriously and rooted itself in self-deprecation and a bemusement at its own existence."

Russell launched *DK Vine* with his friend Chad, when they were both in their impressionable teenage years, and has watched the community grow up alongside them. "The surreal thing about being around so long is that your fansite, which exists due to an appreciation of the creative works of others, actually goes on to influence other people in turn. There have been a myriad of fansites that have sprung up over the years based off our model, many of whom we've struck up a friendship with. For example, while we primarily focus on *Donkey Kong Country*, there's now a *Donkey Kong* arcade fansite called *DK Girder* that delves into the early, pre-Super NES days. That there can be multiple websites that individually focus on one niche aspect of a larger series really shows the versatility and variety of fandom."

"Some of the best friendships of my life have developed thanks to *DK Vine*," Russell continued. "Between the people who have worked on the site through the years and the readers who merely 'got it' the most, I've had the opportunity to befriend and meet people from all over the world. The self-identifying term for those that find a home at *DK Vine* is 'like-minded weirdos', and it's been a pleasure to get to know said weirdos from across North and South America, Europe, and Australia. More than that, we've even had people meet and fall in love through *DK Vine*, which is something I could have never fathomed back in 1999 when all I wanted to do was talk about Lanky Kong."

DK Vine's dedication hasn't gone unnoticed from official sources. "We've had many kind and gracious interactions, both online and in-person, with the shepherds of the series. Retro Studios has sent words of support our way, while Rare has gone so far as to invite us to their studio in the UK!"

"Without a doubt, it was Nintendo announcing that Retro Studios was developing *Donkey Kong Country Returns* in 2010," affirmed Russell, singling out a most meaningful moment in his community's history. "When Reggie Fils-Aimé stood on a stage and announced that Retro Studios was bringing back the beloved series, it was seen as a validation for our community and our fanbase. *Donkey Kong Country* was indeed a Nintendo classic, and its legacy would never be extinguished."

SUPER NOSTALGIA: DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

"*Donkey Kong Country* is one of those flashpoints in my life," began Russell, "in this case where video games took on an entirely different meaning and language than they had initially. I didn't realize it, but *Donkey Kong Country* was the title I had been waiting for since the moment I played my first video game. Here we had an amazingly fun platformer that mixed humorous characters with a world that felt strikingly realistic."

"There was a vitality to it that I had never felt with a Nintendo game up until that point, created thanks to the marriage of the jaw-dropping ACM graphics, brilliant stage design, and naturalistic soundtrack. It obviously raised the bar for the industry, but most importantly for Nintendo it threw down the gauntlet," explained Russell, echoing a common sentiment that *DKC* was pivotal in proving the Super NES's shelf life was nowhere near over.

"*Donkey Kong Country* built a world for Donkey Kong. *DKC* not only aged up the characters, but it gave us a Donkey Kong who was explicitly heroic for the first time in the franchise's history. Giving him a sprawling cast of friends, family, allies, and enemies also helped set apart Donkey Kong from Mario, who up until that point had always overshadowed his former co-star. The combination of protégés and mentors teaming up to solve larger problems gave this community aspect some serious sentimental heft, while removing Donkey Kong from the city and placing him on his own tropical island brought a message of environmental stewardship that's been featured in nearly every DK game since."

Diddy Kong in particular had special relevance to Russell. "Younger gamers may only know him as an annoying, banana-spamming fighter in *Smash Bros.*, but here was a sidekick who was portrayed as a similar age to me and actually felt relatable." As relatable as a monkey who doesn't wear pants can be, he clarified. "That he had something of a character arc that carried forward into the sequel, with him wanting to become a genuine 'video game hero' like his idol Donkey Kong, was the kind of fourth-wall breaking meta-writing that really helped sell the characters and their world."

"Choosing a favorite level in *Donkey Kong Country* is like a parent choosing a favorite child, or being forced to pick the best Beatles song," he continued, lamenting over being asked to highlight a standout stage. "There's so much kinetic, fluid platforming found in that first game. If you know what you're doing, you can fall into an almost hypnotic rhythm, bouncing, swinging, and barrel blasting from point-to-point while in a trance-like state of being. If push came to shove, I'd have to give the vote for the snow levels, with a highlight being the exemplary Snow Barrel Blast. Both the environmental effects and the stage design were married to create the perfect gaming experience, with secrets just out of reach and challenges that became slightly more possible with each failed attempt. That's the magic of *Donkey Kong Country* right there."

Super Fans

Layze Michelle

“Help me... My name is Zelda...”

Country: Brazil | @Layze_michelle | Layzemichelle.com.br

Photographer: Weverton Costa | Brazil | Facebook.com/CSouzaFotografia

“This photo was inspired by the scene in *A Link to the Past* where Link wakes to hear the princess say ‘Help me...My name is Zelda...I am in the castle dungeon.’ I have been in love with this franchise since *A Link to the Past*, so I decided to play all the games. I became a cosplayer in 2011 when I made a Skyward Sword costume. This *Link to the Past* outfit is my seventh Zelda costume.”

Super Fans

Matthew Z.

"Donkey Kong Country" | Digital Art

Country: Poland

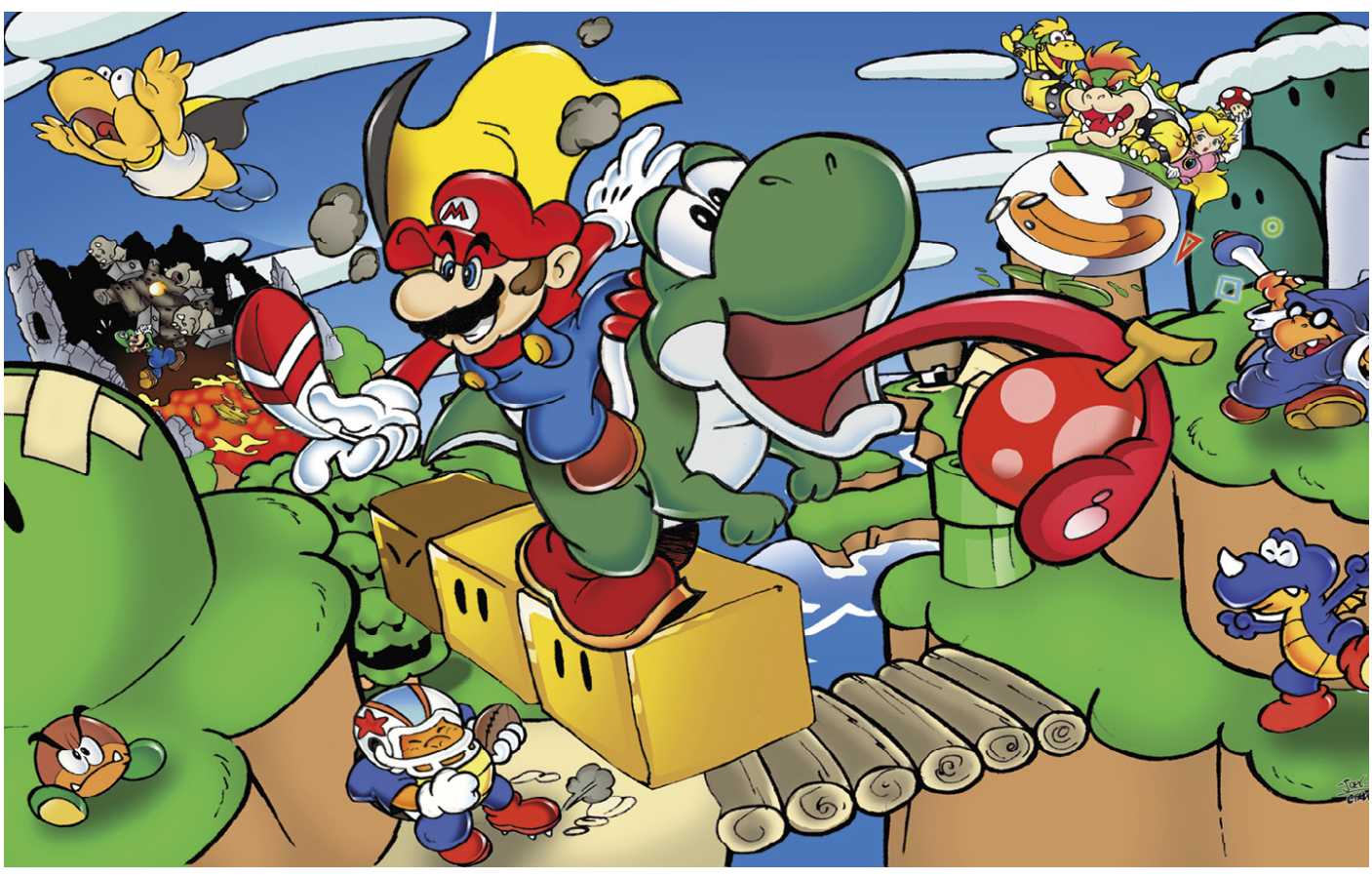
Matiz1994.deviantart.com

"I remember when I got Super NES with *Donkey Kong Country* from Switzerland. Poland didn't quite have the Nintendo consoles and games in stores yet. I was about three or four years old, so it might have been my first game ever. I was surprised that it wasn't some sort of 3D cartoon, and you could interact with the ape on the TV screen! I wanted to draw fan arts for each game from the *Donkey Kong* series, so I started with the first game. My inspiration was the first, most recognizable level. It brought back many memories. The game had amazing music and pre-rendered graphics which pushed Super NES to the limit. It was a really good platformer with various levels. I still sometimes listen to the soundtrack and follow the creators on Twitter."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Fans

Artist Spotlight: Joel Sousa



Country: Portugal

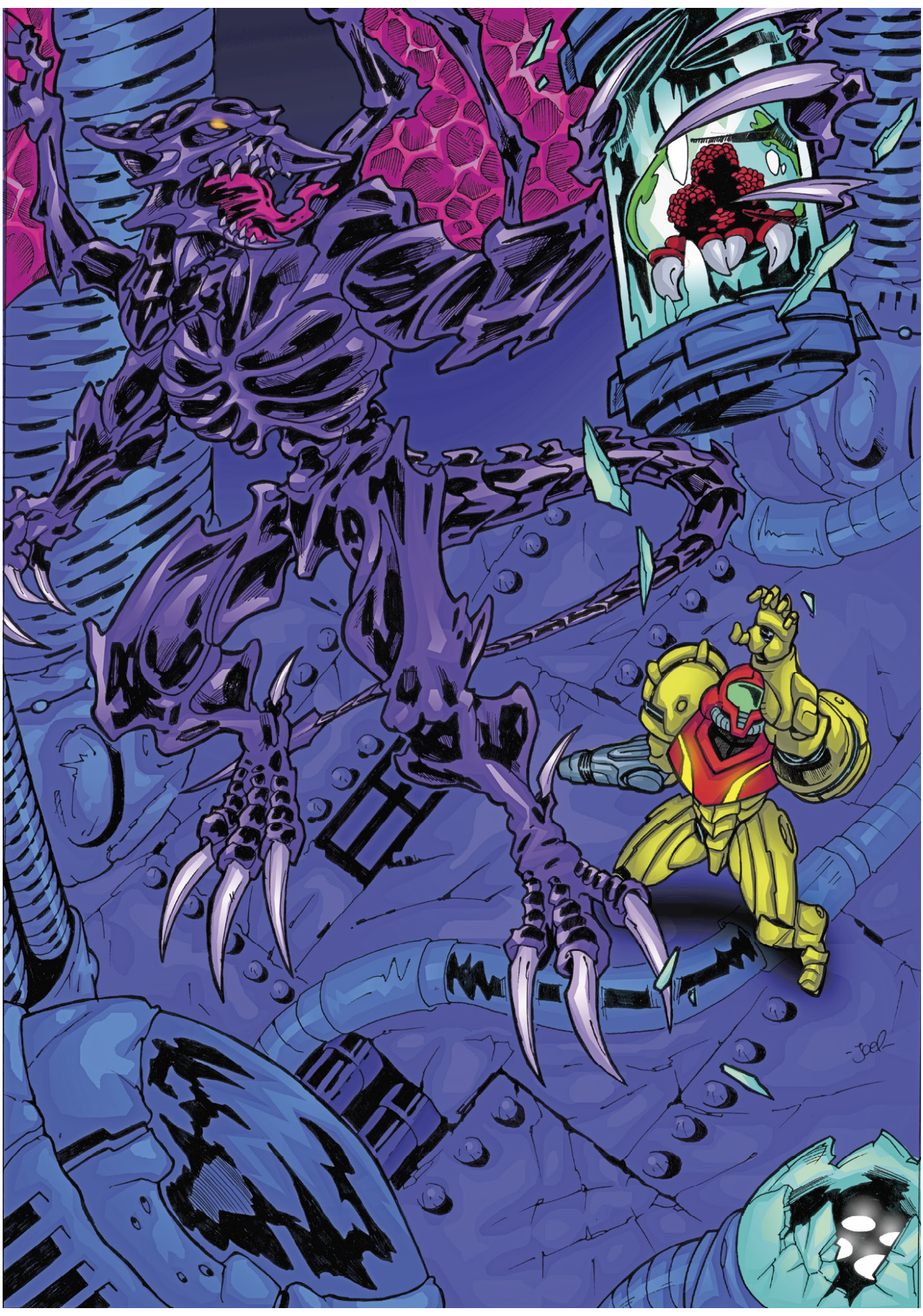
Medium of Art: Traditional, Digital

@SonicWildfire | Facebook.com/joelsousaart

Joel Sousa's career in art started as many others have; he has been illustrating since the farthest reaches of his memory, inspired by pop-culture. "As a little kid I would watch cartoons on TV or read comics, and I'd lay down on the floor to start drawing them."

Nintendo offered up a wealth of content to encourage him in these formative years. "I think it has something to do with the vibrant moments that each game leaves in our memories," explained Sousa. "And upon illustrating those moments, I'm reliving and sharing them with others through my art."

Emulating other artists' work got Sousa started, but eventually he established a style all his own, hallmarked with brilliant colors and exaggerated action. "I think that what's unique to my style is the comic book vibe that some people get upon seeing my Illustrations."



> **"Super Metroid has such a vast amount of cool moments, and any one of those would be amazing to do."**

Sousa's work usually begins with pencil and paper, and then once satisfied with the layout, he moves on to coloring the piece digitally. "I only illustrate games that I have played in order to get the feeling

of the characters and the ambience of the world. After playing the game I'll choose my favourite parts and start sketching until I get that perfect angle for the composition. A thing that helps too is the soundtrack of said game, it'll drive my imagination," he explained, echoing the sentiment of many Super NES-inspired artists.

"*Super Metroid* has such a vast amount of cool moments, and any one of those would be amazing to do," said Sousa, speaking to one of his featured pieces. "But since I wanted to portray Ridley, I went for the very beginning of the game, when he steals the infant metroid after clashing with Samus.

"Usually people comment on how I was able to touch the nostalgia for a certain game of their youth, and that makes me very happy."

Realizing the 16-Bit Dream

Introduction

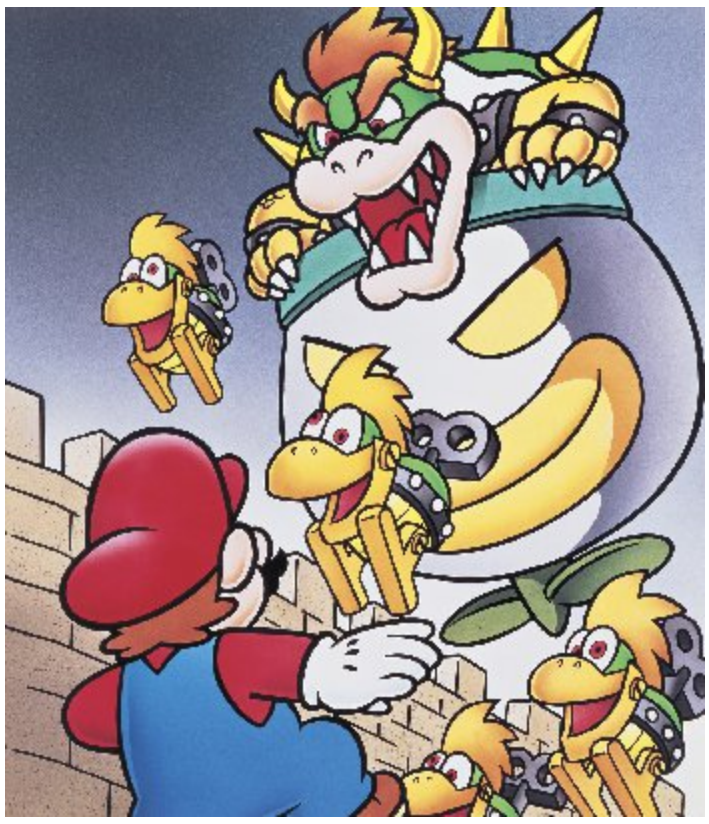
Nintendo could have happily stayed in the 8-bit era forever. Having single-handedly resurrected the industry from the great video game crash of the early 1980s, the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) was set to enjoy unparalleled success well beyond the normal lifespan of any other home console. Yet technology continued to leap forward, and new ways to create and experience interactive entertainment were rapidly emerging.

Nintendo's answer was the next evolution to its history-defining machine: the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (Super NES). Originating in Japan as the Super Famicom, the intensely anticipated console launched on a Wednesday, with the resulting frenzy causing the Japanese government to formally request major product launches be done on weekends. To this day, Nintendo upholds international Friday launch dates instead of Tuesdays like the majority of new game and home video releases.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Realizing the 16-Bit Dream

Launch Titles



The Super Famicom launched in November of 1990 with Super Mario World and F-Zero. In the United States, the Super Nintendo Entertainment System came bundled with Super Mario World, easily making it the console's best-selling game of all time with over 20M copies sold. F-Zero, Pilotwings, SimCity, and Gradius III were also available during the console's launch window, which was rolled out over several weeks ahead of its official, nationwide street date of September 9, 1991.

A dozen more titles were released by the end of the year, including notable sequels such as Super Castlevania IV, Final Fantasy II, and Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts, as well as a port of Capcom's 1989 arcade hit, Final Fight.

Nintendo

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Realizing the 16-Bit Dream

Lifespan

In the end, 783 games were officially released for the Super NES, with over 200 being exclusive to North America. The Super Famicom was home to almost twice as many, with 1,447 games available and 231 more released via the Satellaview add-on.

Many acclaimed franchises were built upon or established during the Super NES era, including Nintendo's best-selling Mario Kart series. Nintendo mascots Yoshi and Kirby became pop culture icons alongside Mario and Luigi, while sequels to Metroid and The Legend of Zelda claimed their places as two of the greatest video games ever created.

Thanks to the system's strong third-party support and Nintendo's fierce dedication to maintaining quality over quantity, the Super NES outlasted several 32-bit rivals that entered and left the market years after its debut. This was due in large part to titles such as Star Fox, Yoshi's Island, and Donkey Kong Country, each of which displayed graphics never thought possible on a 16-bit console and allowed Nintendo to perpetuate its success while forgoing the release of a 32-bit system altogether.

The final first-party title for the Super NES was Kirby's Dream Land 3, released on November 27, 1997. The final third-party release, Frogger, came a year later on October 6, 1998. Nintendo ended production for the Super NES hardware in 1999. In Japan, the Super Famicom was produced through September of 2003, while official game releases were concluded three years prior with HAL Laboratory's graphic adventure game, Metal Slader Glory Director's Cut.

Realizing the 16-Bit Dream

Legacy

Nintendo's 16-bit hardware saw worldwide sales in excess of 49M units, with nearly half of those for the Super NES and approximately 17M for the Super Famicom. It was the best-selling console of the era, and came remarkably close to the NES's record of 61M units sold.

The Super NES lived on, in a way, through Nintendo's successor to the Game Boy handheld device, the Game Boy Advance. Released in 2001 and sharing many of the same hardware capabilities as its console kin, the Game Boy Advance became home to numerous Super NES-style sequels (Metroid Fusion, F-Zero Climax) and enhanced ports of Super NES games (Super Mario World 1 and 2, Donkey Kong Country 1 through 3).

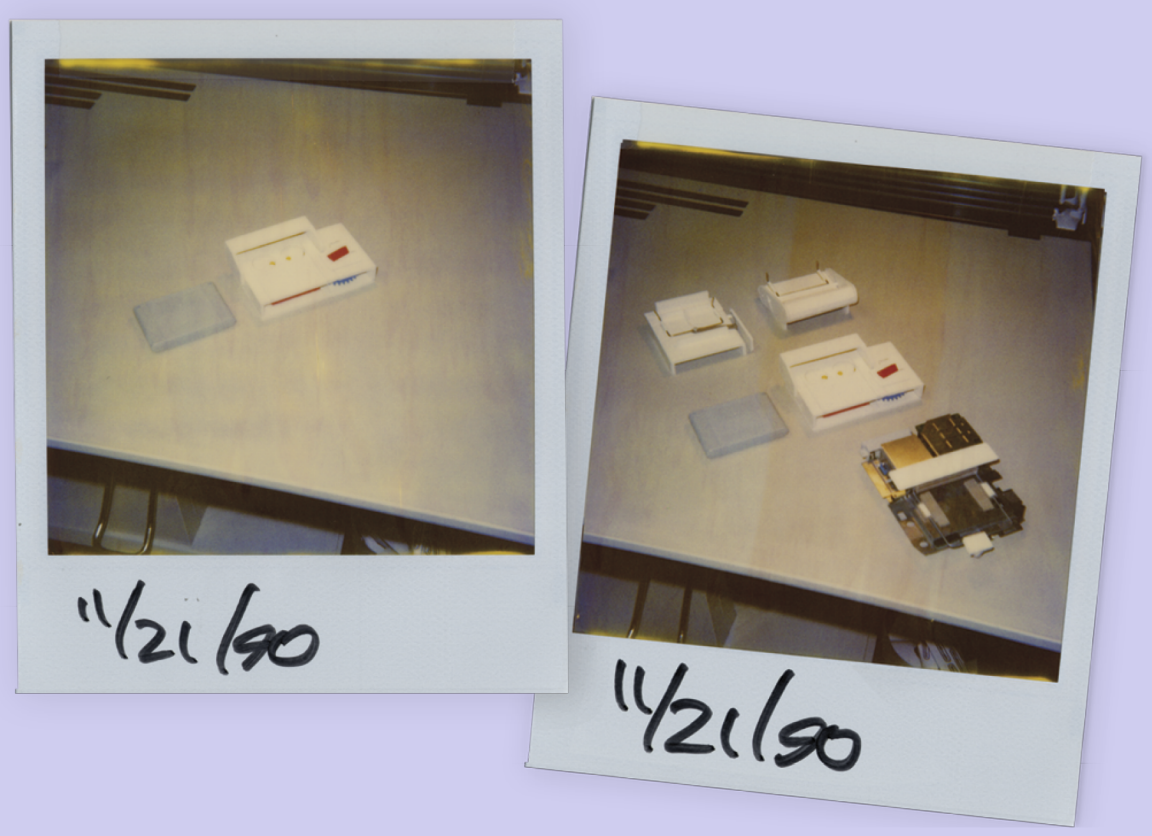
The Super NES Classic Edition was released in 2017. This miniature version of the console came pre-loaded with 21 iconic games, and allowed the 16-bit behemoth to add one final game to its 26-year legacy: Star Fox 2.

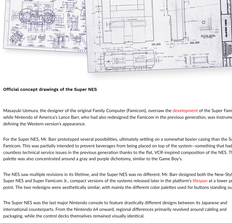
HORIZONTAL EJECTION

When developing the Super NES, Nintendo found that many consumers placed the console in a credenza or stereo cabinet that typically had seven to nine inches of shelf space. This meant that the consumer may not have enough room to pull the cartridge out of the top.

In exploring ways to address this issue, Lance Barr came up with a way to insert the cartridge horizontally. Users turned a knob which pushed the game cartridge into the console, simultaneously turning it on. These models, constructed from foam-core, LEGO gears, and cardboard, were made to prove this concept and demonstrate the basic mechanics of how it would work.

In the end, Nintendo went for the familiar Eject button with a vertical exit for the game cartridge.





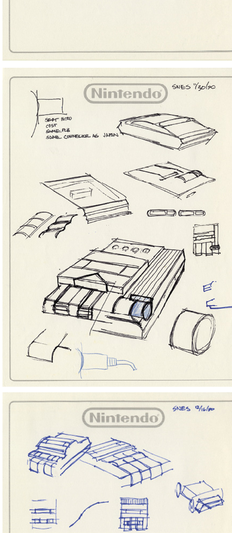
Official concept drawings of the Super NES

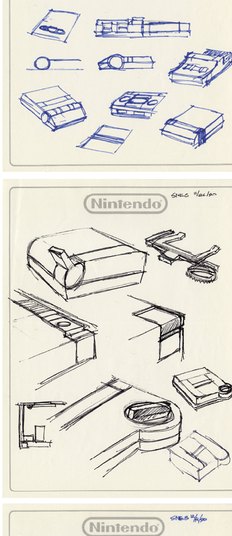
Masayuki Uemura, the designer of the original Family Computer (Famicom), oversaw the development of the Super Famicom while Nintendo of America's Lance Barr, who had also redesigned the Famicom in the previous generation, was instrumental in defining the Western version's appearance.

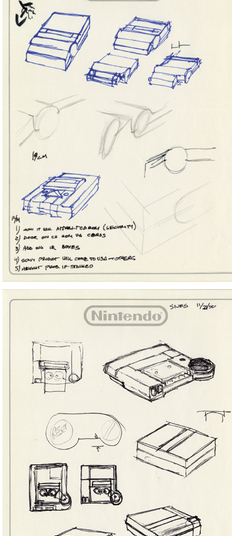
For the Super NES, Mr. Barr prototyped several possibilities, ultimately settling on a somewhat boxier casing than the Super Famicom. This was partially intended to prevent beverages from being placed on top of the system—something that had led to countless technical service issues in the previous generation thanks to the flat, VCR-inspired composition of the NES. The color palette was also concentrated around a gray and purple dichotomy, similar to the Game Boy's.

The NES saw multiple revisions in its lifetime, and the Super NES was no different. Mr. Barr designed both the New-Style Super NES and Super Famicom Jr., compact versions of the systems released later in the platform's lifespan at a lower price point. The two redesigns were aesthetically similar, with mainly the different color palettes used for buttons standing out.

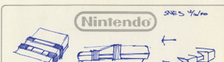
The Super NES was the last major Nintendo console to feature drastically different designs between its Japanese and international counterparts. From the Nintendo 64 onward, regional differences primarily revolved around cabling and packaging, while the control decks themselves remained visually identical.







SUPER NOSTALGIA



With all the love fans had for the original NES, they had a lot of questions regarding the new system. Nintendo Power answered the top ten fan queries in Volume 29 of the popular magazine.

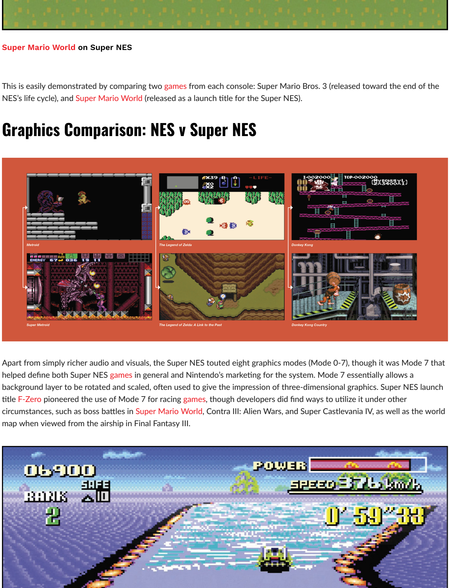
Realizing the 16-Bit Dream

Under the Hood

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

The 8-bit NES featured an available color palette of 48 colors and six grays. It could display up to 64 on-screen sprites simultaneously. The Super NES, by comparison, had a palette of 32,768 colors with double the on-screen maximum for game objects. Every other aspect of the Super NES's technical capabilities was equally superior to its predecessor, allowing developers to immediately create bigger games that both sounded better and looked far more visually stunning.

Super Mario Bros. 3 on NES



Super Mario World on Super NES

This is easily demonstrated by comparing two games from each console: Super Mario Bros. 3 (released toward the end of the NES's life cycle), and Super Mario World (released as a launch title for the Super NES).

Graphics Comparison: NES v Super NES

Apart from simply richer audio and visuals, the Super NES touted eight graphics modes (Mode 0-7), though it was Mode 7 that helped define both Super NES games in general and Nintendo's marketing for the system. Mode 7 essentially allows a background layer to be rotated and scaled, often used to give the impression of three-dimensional graphics. Super NES launch title F-Zero pioneered the use of Mode 7 for racing games, though developers did find ways to utilize it under other circumstances, such as boss battles in Super Mario World, Contra III: Alien Wars, and Super Castlevania IV, as well as the world map when viewed from the airship in Final Fantasy III.

Enhancement Chips

For many of the system's most notable titles, the Super NES's modular onboard hardware was bolstered by custom chips shipped in each Game Pak. The Super FX chip series is the most well-known, allowing the 16-bit console to display the cutting-edge 3D graphics seen in Star Fox, but there were many others. The Super Accelerator 1 (SA1) provided a more powerful alternate core processor over the standard Super NES chipset for use in games like Super Mario RPG: The Legend of the Seven Stars. The Cx4 chip was used in Capcom's Mega Man X series to achieve 3D wireframe effects and advanced sprite manipulation.

Custom chips were key to extending the Super NES's lifespan, allowing for games that would otherwise be literally impossible on the system. Some custom chips were developed for a very limited number of games, or like the OBC-1, used exclusively for a single title—in this case, Metal Combat: Falcon's Revenge for the Super Scope.

OXIDATION

Fans may remember that certain batches of Super NES consoles were susceptible to a notable yellow discoloration. While most plastic products succumb to aging over time, the Super NES's eventual two-tone look was due to the oxidation of the flame-retardant chemicals used on the case. The effect can be reversed, however, with simple household cleaning agents and a bit of patience.

Realizing the 16-Bit Dream

Across the Generations

With each hardware release, Nintendo brought more processing power to their fans. Here's a quick look at how far gaming technology has come in the past three decades.

Nintendo Entertainment System

Release Date: July 15, 1983

game format: Cartridge (0.5 MB)

video outputs: Antenna, RF, RCA, Composite

cpu speed: 1.79 MHz (5.32 MHz)

Super Nintendo Entertainment System

Release Date: November 21, 1990

game format: Cartridge (16 MB)

video outputs: Antenna, RF, RCA, Composite, S-Video

cpu speed: 3.58 MHz

Nintendo 64

Release Date: June 23, 1996

game format: Cartridge (64 MB)

video outputs: Antenna, RF, RCA, Composite, S-Video

cpu speed: 93.75 MHz (62.5 MHz)

Nintendo GameCube

Release Date: September 14, 2001

game format: Optical Disk (1.5 GB)

video outputs: RCA, Composite, Component, S-Video

cpu speed: 485 MHz (162 MHz)

Wii

Release Date: November 19, 2006

game format: Optical Disk (8.5 GB), Downloads

video outputs: RCA, Composite, Component, S-Video

cpu speed: 729 MHz (243 MHz)

Wii U

Release Date: November 18, 2012

game format: Optical Disk (25 GB), Downloads

video outputs: Component, RCA/Composite, S-Video, HDMI

cpu speed: 1.24 GHz (550 MHz)

Nintendo Switch

Release Date: March 3, 2017

game format: Cartridge, Downloads

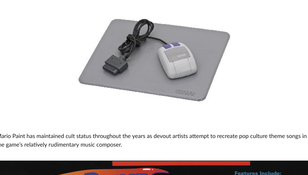
video outputs: HDMI

cpu speed: 2 GHz (1GHz)

Although the Super NES didn't get a robot companion or Power Glove, it did receive its fair share of first- and third-party accessories. Some of the standouts included a golf club, baseball bat, and exercise bike!

Controller

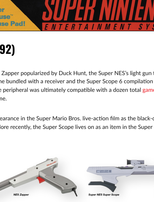
The standard Super NES controller introduced a number of innovations that have since become industry standard. Shoulder buttons labeled "L" and "R" were placed at the top of the controller, which, combined with new buttons on the face of the controller, tripled the available inputs over the NES. This allowed for drastically more complex gameplay mechanics to be introduced during the 16-bit era and is generally used as the default button layout for most modern controllers.



The Super NES controller was designed to be more ergonomic than its rectangular predecessor, and the dog bone-style design proved so popular it was retroactively applied to controllers accompanying the lower-priced NES-101. Lance Barr added an important feature. Unlike the Super Famicom controller, the X and Y buttons on the Super NES controller were made concave, to help players quickly differentiate them from the rounded A and B buttons.

Super NES Mouse (1992)

The Super NES Mouse and mouse pad came bundled with Mario Paint. Mario Paint featured a collection of creativity applications such as painting, swatting flies, and animating small scenes, all of which required the mouse to play.

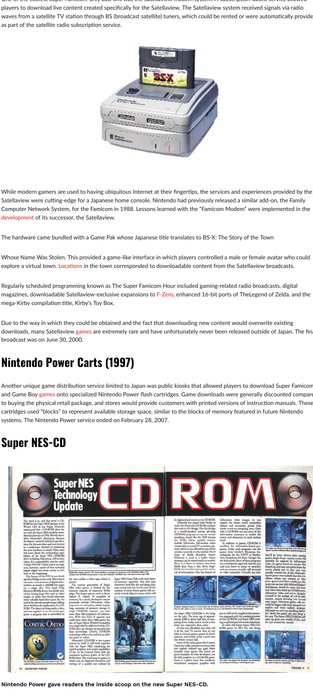


Mario Paint has maintained cult status throughout the years as devout artists attempt to recreate pop culture theme songs in the game's relatively rudimentary music composer.

Super Scope (1992)

Not to be outdone by the NES Zapper popularized by Duck Hunt, the Super NES's light gun transmitter was modeled after a bazooka! The Super Scope came bundled with a receiver and the Super Scope 6 compilation that included games like Blastris, Intercept, and Mole Patrol. The peripheral was ultimately compatible with a dozen total games, including Yoshi's Safari, Battle Clash, and T2: The Arcade Game.

The Super Scope made an appearance in the Super Mario Bros. live-action film as the black-colored "Devo gun" used by King Koopa to devolve his target. More recently, the Super Scope lives on as an item in the Super Smash Bros. series.



Super Game Boy (1994)

The Super Game Boy adapter cartridge enabled Game Boy Game Paks to be played on a Super NES. This was not done through emulation, meaning the Super Game Boy contains the same hardware as an actual Game Boy. In some cases, Game Boy titles were enhanced through the Super NES hardware, providing improved sound or even multiplayer functionality.

A Super Game Boy 2 was released in Japan in 1998 with several minor improvements, and rectified an issue with the original that caused games to be played 2.4% faster than their intended speed.

Satellaview (1995)

One of the coolest Super Famicom-only add-ons was the Satellaview modem system. A subscription-based service allowed players to download live content created specifically for the Satellaview. The Satellaview system received signals via radio waves from a satellite TV station through BS (broadcast satellite) tuners, which could be rented or were automatically provided as part of the satellite radio subscription service.

While modern gamers are used to having ubiquitous Internet at their fingertips, the services and experiences provided by the Satellaview were cutting-edge for a Japanese home console. Nintendo had previously released a similar add-on, the Family Computer Network System, for the Famicom in 1988. Lessons learned with the "Famicom Modem" were implemented in the development of its successor, the Satellaview.

The hardware came bundled with a Game Pak whose Japanese title translates to BS-X: The Story of the Town

Whose Name Was Stolen. This provided a game-like interface in which players controlled a male or female avatar who could explore a virtual town. Locations in the town corresponded to downloadable content from the Satellaview broadcasts.

Regularly scheduled programming known as The Super Famicom Hour included gaming-related radio broadcasts, digital magazines, downloadable Satellaview-exclusive expansions to F-Zero, enhanced 16-bit ports of TheLegend of Zelda, and the mega-Kirby compilation title, Kirby's Toy Box.

Due to the way in which they could be obtained and the fact that downloading new content would overwrite existing downloads, many Satellaview games are extremely rare and have unfortunately never been released outside of Japan. The final broadcast was on June 30, 2000.

Nintendo Power Carts (1997)

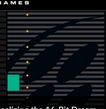
Another unique game distribution service limited to Japan was public kiosks that allowed players to download Super Famicom and Game Boy games onto specialized Nintendo Power flash cartridges. Game downloads were generally discounted compared to buying the physical retail package, and stores would provide customers with printed versions of instruction manuals. These cartridges used "blocks" to represent available storage space, similar to the blocks of memory featured in future Nintendo systems. The Nintendo Power service ended on February 28, 2007.

Super NES-CD

Nintendo Power gave readers the inside scoop on the new Super NES-CD.

The Super NES-CD (alternatively known as the Super Disc) was a canceled add-on that would have played CD-ROM-based games. Originally developed in a partnership with Sony, who had provided the audio chip for the Super NES, conceptualizing for the 32-bit Super NES-CD started as early as 1988. One of the principal games in development for the system was Square's Secret of Mana, which was eventually modulated to fit in a Super NES Game Pak instead.

PRIMA GAMES



Realizing the 16-Bit Dream

Top 20 Best-Selling Games

1 SUPER MARIO WORLD

Developer: Nintendo EAD

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: November 21, 1990

2 SUPER MARIO ALL-STARS

Developer: Nintendo EAD

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: July 14, 1993

3 DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

Developer: Rare

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: November 21, 1994

4 SUPER MARIO KART

Developer: Nintendo EAD

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: August 27, 1992

5 STREET FIGHTER II: THE WORLD WARRIOR

Developer: Capcom

Publisher: Capcom

Release Date: June 10, 1992

6 DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2: DIDDY'S KONG QUEST

Developer: Rare

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: November 20, 1995

7 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA:

Developer: Nintendo EAD

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: November 21, 1991

8 SUPER MARIO WORLD 2: YOSHI'S ISLAND

Developer: Nintendo EAD

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: August 5, 1995

9 STREET FIGHTER II TURBO: HYPER FIGHTING

Developer: Capcom

Publisher: Capcom

Release Date: July 11, 1993

10 DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 3: DIXIE KONG'S DOUBLE TROUBLE!

Developer: Rare

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: November 22, 1996

11 FINAL FANTASY VI

Developer: Square

Publisher: Square

Release Date: April 2, 1994

12 KILLER INSTINCT

Developer: Rare

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: August 30, 1995

13 DRAGON QUEST VI

Developer: Chunsoft

Publisher: Enix

Release Date: December 9, 1995

14 STAR FOX

Developer: Nintendo EAD

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: February 21, 1993

15 F-ZERO

Developer: Nintendo EAD

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: November 21, 1990

16 DRAGON QUEST V

Developer: Chunsoft

Publisher: Enix

Release Date: September 27, 1992

17 FINAL FANTASY V

Developer: Square

Publisher: Square

Release Date: December 6, 1992

18 MARIO PAINT

Developer: Nintendo R&D1

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: July 14, 1992

19 SUPER MARIO RPG: LEGEND OF THE SEVEN STARS

Developer: Square

Publisher: Nintendo

Release Date: March 9, 1996

20 CHRONO TRIGGER

Developer: Square

Publisher: Square

Release Date: March 11, 1995

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Realizing the 16-Bit Dream

Nintendo Hardware Museum

At release, the Super NES was the latest entry in a storied lineage of Nintendo brand hardware that began well before the release of its famed 8-bit console. For over 40 years Nintendo has produced electronic gaming products.

Color TV-Game (1977-1980)

Color TV-Game was a series of five first-generation home consoles. Each system included variations of a single game. For example, the Color TV-Game 6 provided six alterations to the Pong-inspired paddle-ball game, Light Tennis. The Color TV-Game Racing 112 included a steering wheel and gearshift, and marked the first game project of a young Nintendo employee named Shigeru Miyamoto.

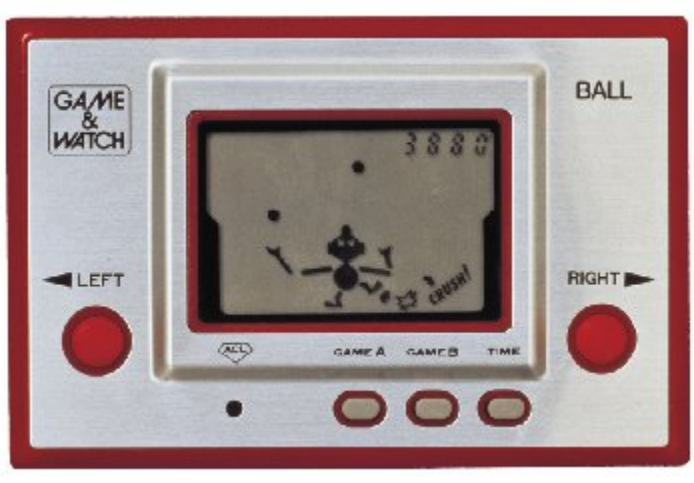
Despite being released exclusively in Japan, the Color TV-Game collection amassed over 3M units sold, drastically outselling competition such as the Magnavox Odyssey and Atari's Home Pong system.

SUPER NOSTALGIA

Nintendo's commitment to their hardware didn't end at the production line. The Nintendo World Class Service team was on hand to help players with any technical difficulties they might encounter.

Game & Watch (1980-1991)

Developed by Gunpei Yokoi and Satoru Okada as a way for adults to discreetly kill time on public transportation, Game & Watch was a series of miniature battery-powered single-game devices. Although the design started out simple, later Game & Watch releases pioneered, among other things, the cross-shaped directional pad used in nearly every gaming controller since, and the multi-screen clamshell design that would eventually characterize the Game Boy Advance SP and Nintendo 3DS handhelds.



The first Game & Watch release was Ball, in 1980. Donkey Kong, The Legend of Zelda, and many others received the Game & Watch treatment up until 1991 with Mario the Juggler being the final release.

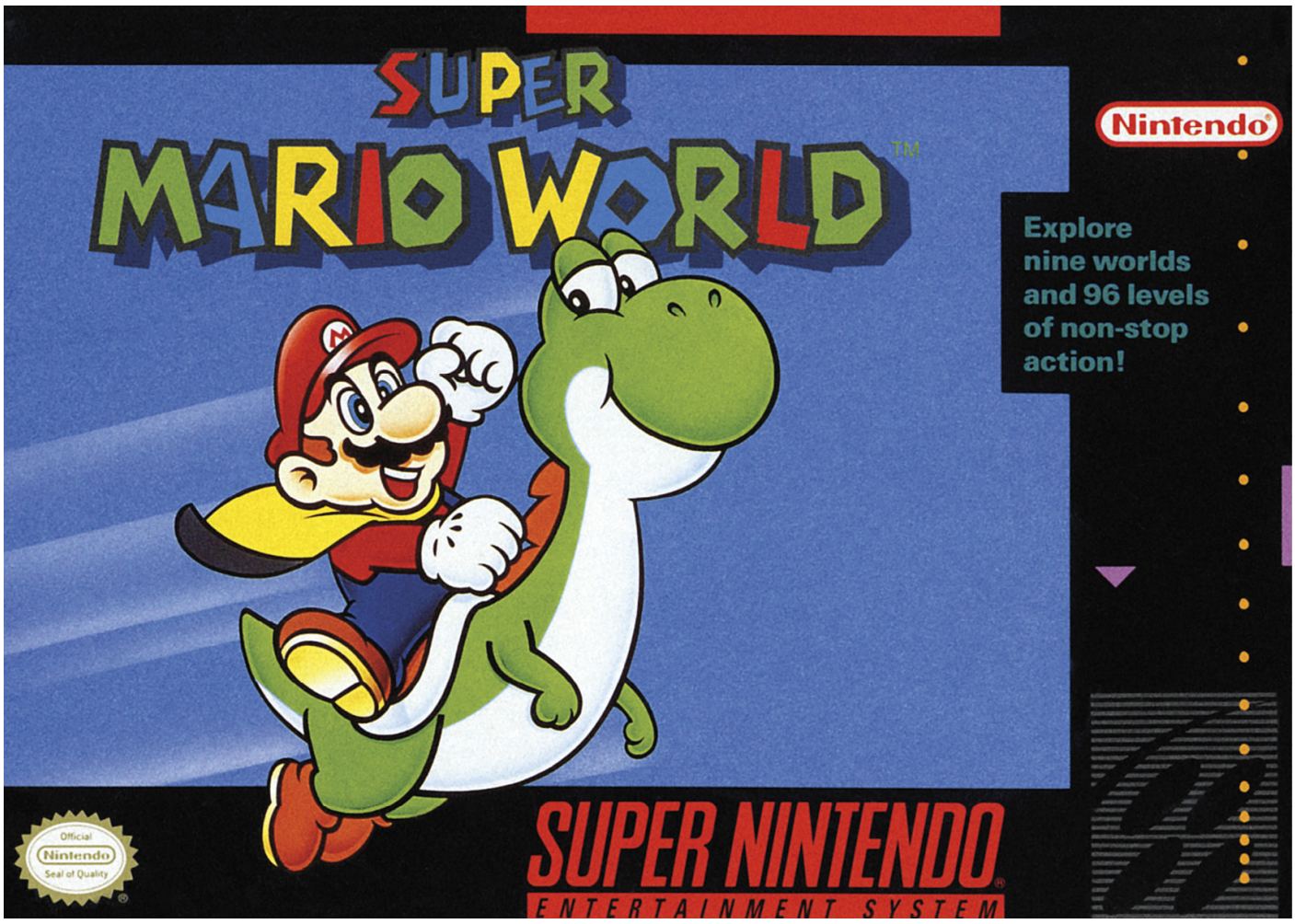
Game Boy (1989)

Mr. Okada followed up the Game & Watch with a more ambitious handheld seeking to match the long-term sustainability and success of the Famicom. The Game Boy needs no introduction, selling over 118M units across its various incarnations (nearly twice as many as the NES) and elevating Russian designer Alexey Pajitnov's Tetris to a worldwide phenomenon.

The Game Boy Color, released nearly a decade later, enabled classic grayscale Game Boy titles to be played with one of several color palettes.

Super Mario World

Overview



DEVELOPER

Nintendo EAD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: November 21, 1990

NA: August 13, 1991

EU: April 11, 1992

After saving the Mushroom Kingdom from Bowser and the rest of the Koopas in *Super Mario Bros. 3*, Mario and Luigi needed to recuperate from their adventures. Together they agreed that the best place to vacation was a magical place called Dinosaur Land.

But while Mario and Luigi reclined on the beach for a relaxing nap, Princess Toadstool disappeared, apparently seized by evil forces. After searching for hours for their missing friend, Mario and Luigi came upon an enormous egg in the forest.

Suddenly the egg hatched, and out popped a young dinosaur named Yoshi, who proceeded to tell Mario and Luigi a sad tale of how his dinosaur pals were sealed in similar eggs by a group of monstrous turtles.

“Monstrous turtles!” exclaimed Luigi. “Bowser and his bunch have returned!” Mario slowly nodded his head in agreement and, along with Luigi and Yoshi, set off across Dinosaur Land to find the Princess and to free Yoshi’s friends. As they began their journey, Yoshi handed Mario a beautiful cape. “This may help you,” Yoshi said. “Some say it has magical powers.”

With a little luck (and help from a magic cape), our hearty crew can defeat the seven worlds of Bowser’s Krazy Koopa Kritters. Many locations are well-hidden so explore everywhere and try everything. Not all locations have to be explored to rescue the dinosaurs and save Princess Toadstool, but there are many “starry” treasures to be found in far-reaching places. You’ll need to search all areas to find what kinds of treasures are there…in *Super Mario World*.

Nintendo

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World
Development

Super Mario World was developed over the course of three years by Nintendo's all-star Entertainment Analysis and Development (EAD) division. Director Takashi Tezuka, producer Shigeru Miyamoto, artist Shigefumi Hino, and composer Koji Kondo were tasked with translating the Mario phenomenon into the 16-bit era. *Super Mario World* not only had the unique pressure of a console launch title, requiring it to showcase the capabilities of Nintendo's new hardware, but it also needed to catapult the *Super Mario* franchise forward, rather than laterally. Nintendo needed to prove that it, along with Mario and the industry as a whole, could continuously evolve.

Concern both within and from gamers critics about "more of the same" was an early hurdle. Although *Super Mario Bros. 3* released in Japan in 1988, the game debuted in the West in 1990, less than a year before *Super Mario World*'s launch. Any similarities between the two would be fresh in the minds of American consumers. Reflecting on development in the official 1990 guidebook, Mr. Tezuka noted, "Many people at Nintendo who saw *Super Mario World* being developed remarked to us, 'It doesn't look all that different from the Famicom games.' We felt the same way."

Super Mario Bros. 3.5

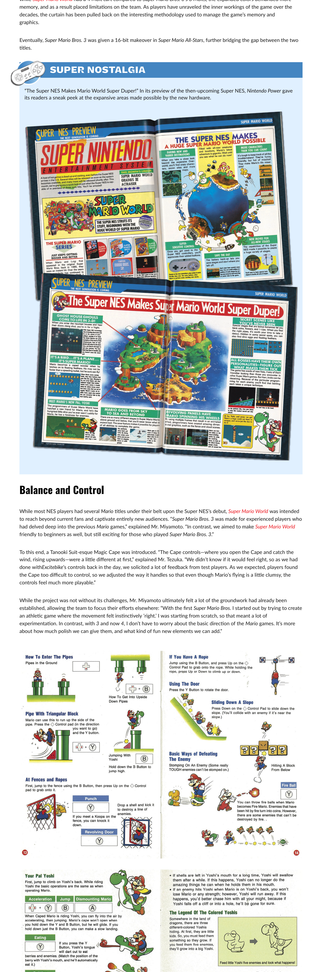
Due to the team's unfamiliarity with the new hardware and the software tools still being in development, it was decided to port *Super Mario Bros. 3* into the Super NES and use that as the foundation for the next big Mario game. Early screenshots reflect this decision by showing different sprites for Mario and a plethora of visuals unique from what ended up in the final game. Raccoon Mario saw screen time early on but was eventually replaced by the Magic Cape. "We no longer had the restrictions on scrolling and the number of colors that the Famicom had," Mr. Miyamoto revealed in an interview from the official guidebook in 1990. "So it became much easier to depict things. That was nice. However, before starting *Super Mario World* we ported Mario 3 to the Super Famicom as a hardware experiment, and even though the colors and sprites were more detailed, it was still the same game. It made me realize that we couldn't just make the same game again: we had to create something new. It was in that context that we talked about how to make the most of the new hardware."

The team continually discovered "cool things" the hardware was capable of, yet didn't necessarily add to the game in a meaningful way. "If it ruined the balance or flow of the game, we didn't want to include it," said Mr. Miyamoto. Additionally, while *Super Mario World* had a 4 Mbit cart compared to *Super Mario Bros. 3*'s 3 Mbits, the game demanded more memory, and as a result placed limitations on the team. As players have unraveled the inner workings of the game over the decades, the curtain has been pulled back on the interesting methodology used to manage the game's memory and graphics.

Eventually, *Super Mario Bros. 3* was given a 16-bit makeover in *Super Mario All-Stars*, further bridging the gap between the two titles.

SUPER NOSTALGIA

"The Super NES Makes Mario World *Super Duper!*" In its preview of the then-upcoming Super NES, *Nintendo Power* gave its readers a sneak peek at the expansive areas made possible by the new hardware.

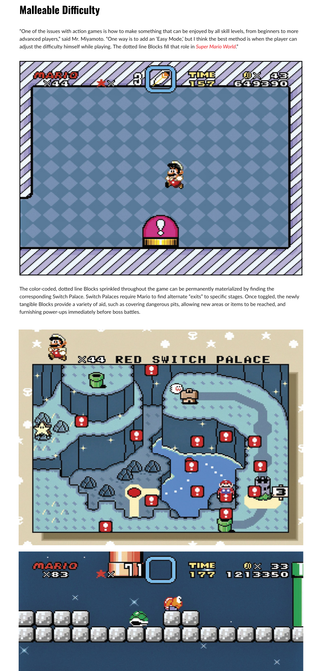


Balance and Control

While most NES players had several Mario titles under their belt upon the Super NES's debut, *Super Mario World* was intended to reach beyond current fans and captivate entirely new audiences. "*Super Mario Bros. 3* was made for experienced players who had delved deep into the previous Mario games," explained Mr. Miyamoto. "In contrast, we aimed to make *Super Mario World* friendly to beginners as well, but still exciting for those who played *Super Mario Bros. 3*."

To this end, a Tanooki Suit–esque Magic Cape was introduced. The Cape controls—where you open the Cape and catch the wind, rising upwards—were a little different at first," explained Mr. Tezuka. "We didn't know if it would feel right, so as we had done with[Excitebike's controls back in the day, we selected a lot of feedback from test players. As we expected, players found the Cape too difficult to control, so we adjusted the way it handles so that even though Mario's flying is a little clumsy, the controls feel much more playable."

While the project was not without its challenges, Mr. Miyamoto ultimately felt a lot of the groundwork had already been established, allowing the team to focus their efforts elsewhere: "With the first *Super Mario Bros.* I started out by trying to create an athletic game where the movement felt instinctively 'right.' I was starting from scratch, so that meant a lot of experimentation. In contrast, with 3 and now 4, I don't have to worry about the basic direction of the Mario games. It's more about how much polish we can give them, and what kind of fun new elements we can add."



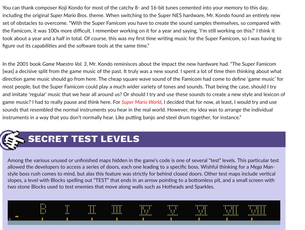
And though the game did introduce numerous new elements, the record of those directly responsible was lost in the shuffle even during development. "I really don't know anymore who came up with which idea," Mr. Miyamoto stated in 1990. "Things get decided by everyone throwing their two cents in: 'Oh, how about this?' or 'Make it do that!' Although people do still claim certain things from past games, like, 'Hey, that was my idea!' Taking Zelda and Mario as an example, though, it's almost entirely the same team for both series, and while we're bouncing ideas off each other you often hear things like, 'Oh, that idea would work better for Zelda, I think.' So maybe you'll see Link riding a dinosaur next game."

It's been over 25 years and we're still eager for *The Legend of Yoshi*, Miyamoto-san!

Malleable Difficulty

"One of the issues with action games is how to make something that can be enjoyed by all skill levels, from beginners to more advanced players," said Mr. Miyamoto. "One way is to add an 'Easy Mode,' but I think the best method is when the player can adjust the difficulty himself while playing. The dotted line Blocks fit that role in *Super Mario World*."

The color-coded, dotted line Blocks sprinkled throughout the game can be permanently materialized by finding the corresponding Switch Palace. Switch Palaces require Mario to find alternate "exits" to specific stages. Once toggled, the newly tangible Blocks provide a variety of aid, such as covering dangerous pits, allowing new areas or items to be reached, and furnishing power-ups immediately before boss battles.



Audio

You can thank composer Koji Kondo for most of the catchy 8- and 16-bit tunes centered into your memory to this day, including the original *Super Mario Bros.* theme. When switching to the Super NES hardware, Mr. Kondo found an entirely new set of obstacles to overcome. "With the Super Famicom you have to create the sound samples themselves, so compared with the Famicom, it was 100x more difficult. I remember working on it for a year and saying, 'I'm still working on this!' I think it took about a year and a half in total. Of course, this was my first time writing music for the Super Famicom, so I was having to figure out its capabilities and the software tools at the same time."

In the 2001 book *Game Maestro Vol. 3*, Mr. Kondo reminisces about the impact the new hardware had. "The Super Famicom [was] a decisive split from the game music of the past. It truly was a new sound. I spent a lot of time then thinking about what direction game music should go from here. The cheap square wave sound of the Famicom had come to define 'game music' for most people, but the Super Famicom could play a much wider variety of tones and sounds. That being the case, should I try and imitate 'regular' music that we hear all around us? Or should I try and use those sounds to create a new style and lexicon of game music? I had to really pause and think here. For *Super Mario World*, I decided that for now, at least, I would try and use sounds that resembled the normal instruments you hear in the real world. However, my idea was to arrange the individual instruments in a way that you don't normally hear. Like putting banjo and steel drum together, for instance."

SECRET TEST LEVELS

Among the various unused or unfinished maps hidden in the game's code is one of several "test" levels. This particular test allowed the developers to access a series of doors, each one leading to a specific boss. Wishful thinking for a Mega Man–style boss rush comes to mind, but alas this feature was strictly for behind closed doors. Other test maps include vertical slopes, a level with Blocks spelling out "TEST" that ends in an arrow pointing to a bottomless pit, and a small screen with two stone Blocks used to test enemies that move along walls such as Hotheads and Sparkies.

Mario

Bringing Nintendo's pixelated superstar onto a console vastly superior to its predecessor enabled players to see Mario in a level of detail never before possible. Speaking to *Nintendo Online Monthly* for Mario's 20th Anniversary in 2005, Mr. Miyamoto explained why he felt the illustrious plumber was such a timeless icon: "I think it was fortuitous that we didn't put any restrictions on Mario as a character. Normally when you create a character and present him to the world, all the details get filled in: What's his favorite color? What kind of food does he like to eat? But with Mario, aside from the fact that he's about 24-25 years old, we didn't define anything else. The reason why is that we wanted to be able to use Mario in later games, and that wouldn't work so well if he had characteristics that interfered with a given game's story. When we make a game we take care not to add incongruences to that game's world."

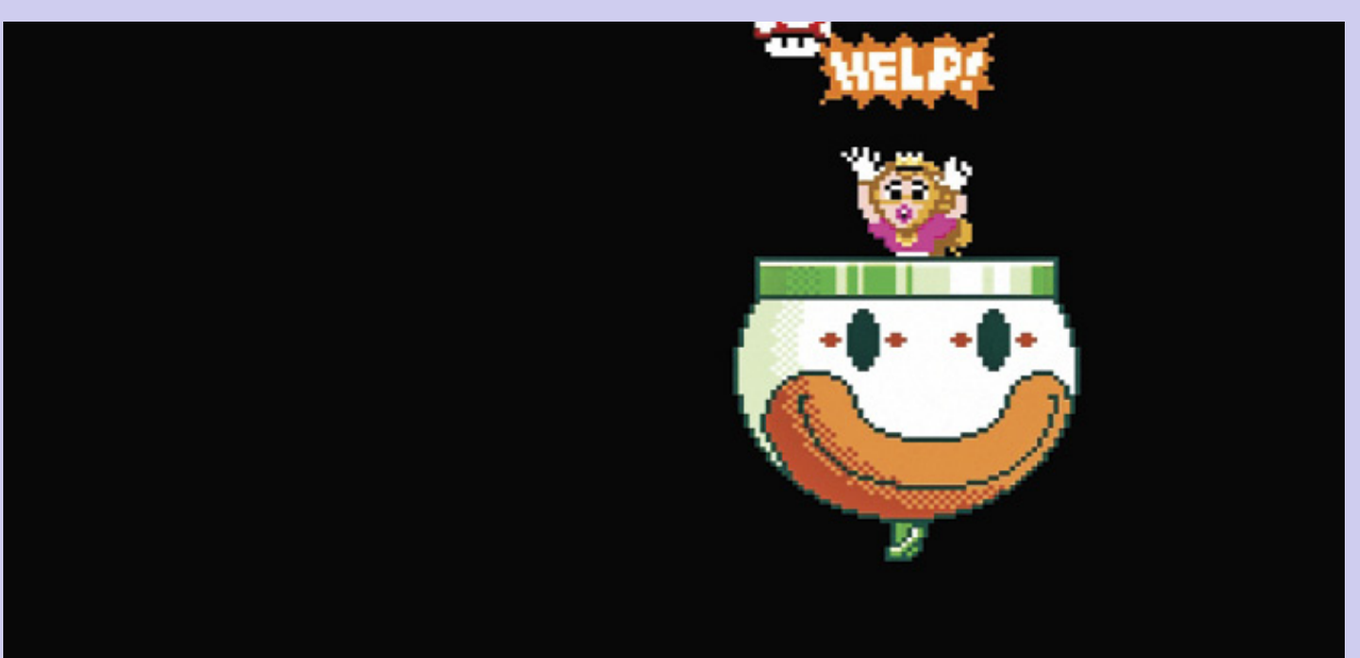
Although the extensive lineup of animal suits from *Super Mario Bros. 3* is absent, Mario is given a few new tricks, most notably, the Spin Jump and Magic Cape. These two tools would be central to plundering the game's hidden depth over the years as speedrunners invented increasingly impressive ways to utilize the mechanics, often negating dangerous obstacles or outright circumventing them altogether. Although the Magic Cape would go on to be mostly exclusive to *Super Mario World*, the Spin Jump would become a staple of Mario's acrobatic repertoire, and is also the reason it is so challenging to beat 95% of the player-created *Super Mario Maker* levels.

Luigi

Accessible via Two-Player mode, Luigi was simply a palette swap of Mario in the initial SNES release. In the *Super Mario All-Stars + Super Mario World* compilation, Luigi was given his own unique sprite set, with the strictly cosmetic changes including sliding down hills on his knees instead of his posterior like Mario, and literally spitting fireballs instead of throwing them. In the *Super Mario Advance 2* remake, Luigi's sprite set was once again altered to reflect his lankier appearance when compared to his brother, but, like in *Super Mario Bros. 2*, his jumps were higher, along with some additional minor gameplay differences.

And for anyone rooting for the underdog, completing the game as Luigi will net him a kiss from the Princess, instead of Mario. Drama!

PRINCESS TOADSTOOL



Power-Ups

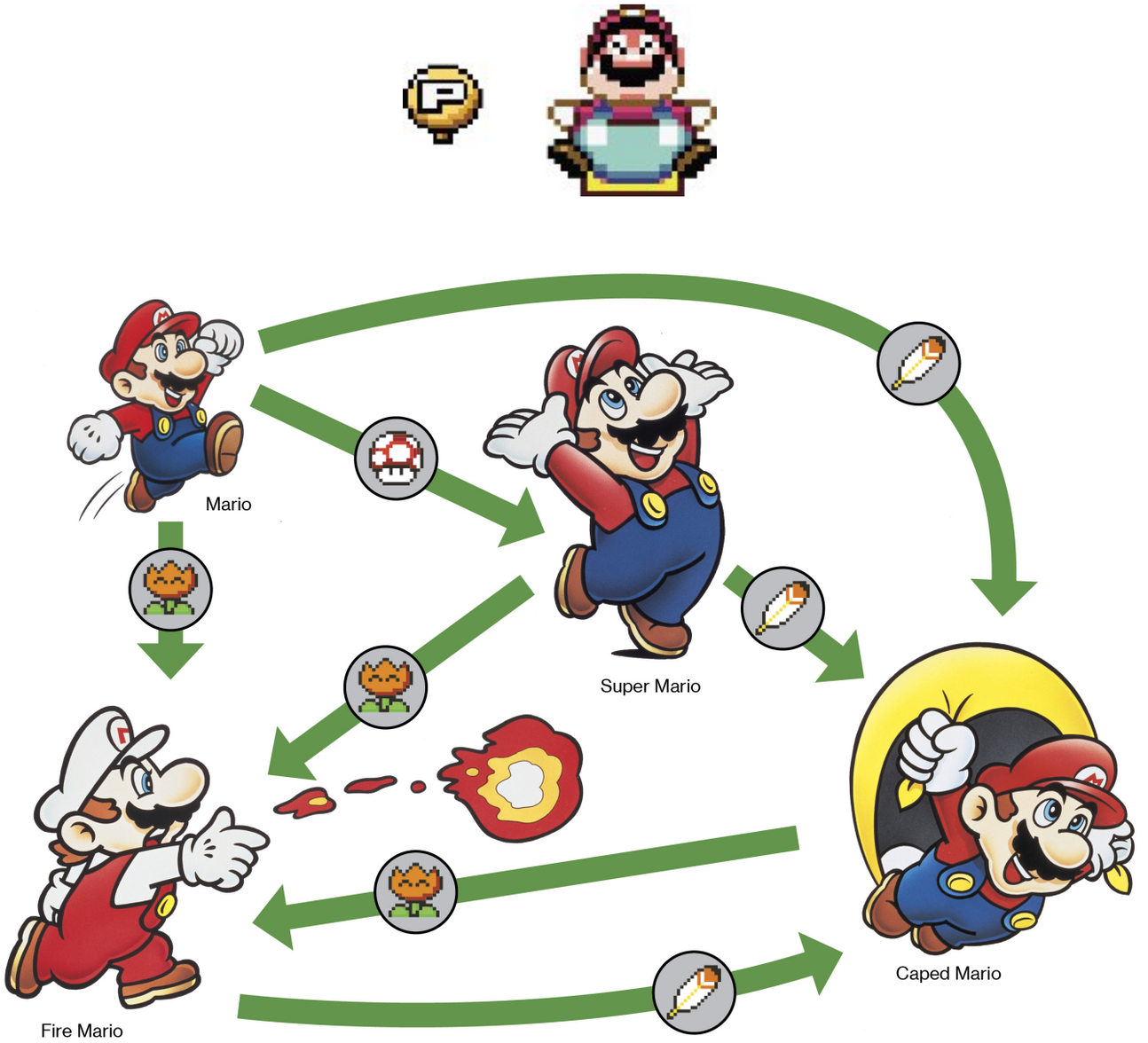
SUPER MUSHROOM

FIRE FLOWER

CAPE FEATHER

STARMAN

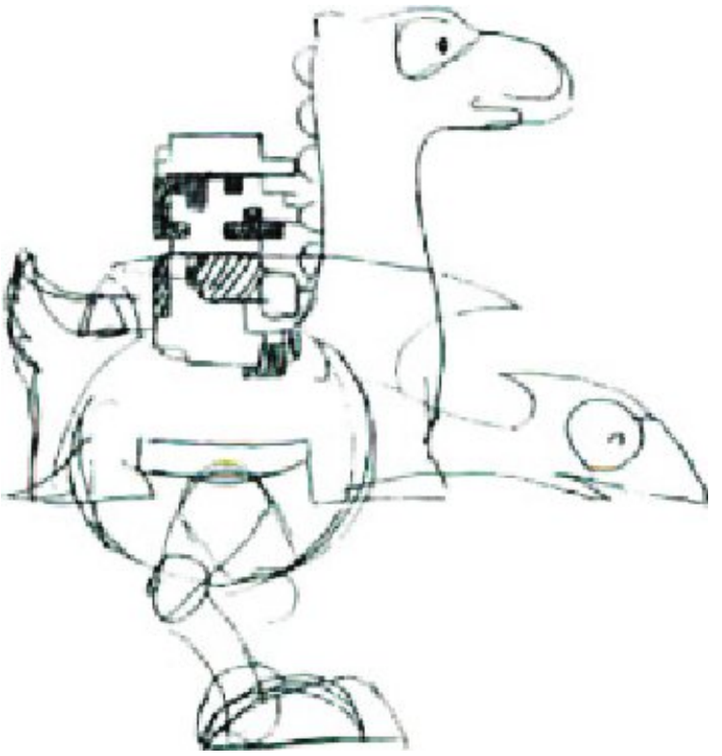
P-BALLOON



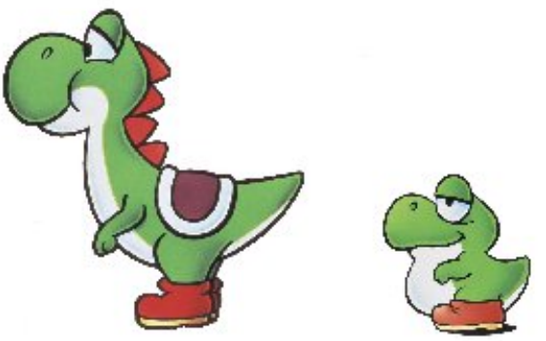
Yoshi

In many ways, *Super Mario World* was the game Nintendo EAD always wanted to create. The truest example of that is T. Yoshisaur Munchakoopas, Mario's new dinosaur sidekick. Since the inception of the original *Super Mario Bros.* half a decade prior, Mr. Miyamoto kept a rough drawing at his desk of Mario riding what would eventually become Yoshi. Tezuka stated at the time that he believed Miyamoto's love of horse riding and country western themes influenced Yoshi's creation. To corroborate that belief, Yoshi's shell was originally meant to be a saddle.

Yoshi's creation is attributed to character designer Shigefumi Hino, who went on to direct *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island*, as well as the *Pikmin* series. Mr. Hino provided the voice of Yoshi up to 1997, when *Yoshi's Story* composer Kazumi Totaka took over the duty of providing the dinosaur's squeaks, squeals, and tendency to say its own name. Though technical limitations prevented Yoshi from being included in the first three *Super Mario Bros.*, Yoshi's debut in *Super Mario World* was a substantial success, catapulting yet another Nintendo mascot into the pop culture stratosphere.



Yoshi proved to be so popular in fact that he not only took center stage in the *Super Mario World* prequel/sequel, but also in a slew of Yoshi-themed spin-off games which still sell strong to this day. Additionally, Yoshi remains a fan-favorite pick in various *Mario* universe-related franchises such as *Mario Kart* and *Mario Party*. Essentially, after 1990 you'd be hard-pressed to name a game in which Mario appears without his prehistoric companion.



YOSHI FEVER

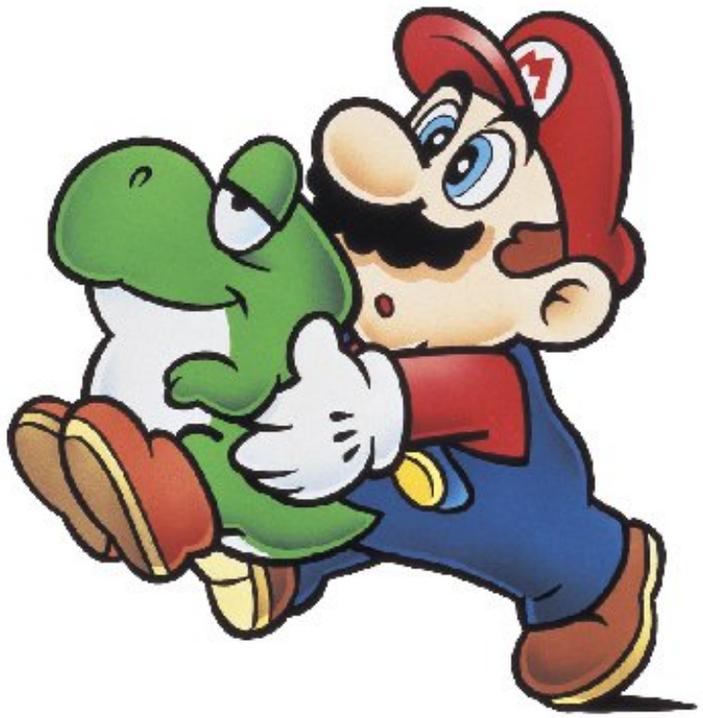
Yoshi's absence in *Super Mario Bros. 3*, due to the hardware's technical limitations, caused the developers to add the Frog Suit and Raccoon Mario instead. In *Super Mario All-Stars*, one of the kings in the *Super Mario Bros. 3* remake is transformed into a Yoshi.

Yoshi fever reached as far as games like 1995's *Tetris Attack*, which takes place on Yoshi's Island and features Yoshi as the main character.

A fully animatronic Yoshi appeared in the 1993 *Super Mario Bros.* live-action film.

Yoshi Egg

When a Yoshi Egg is discovered, usually from a ? Block, a full-grown green Yoshi hatches and allows Mario or Luigi to hop on its back for a ride. If the player already has Yoshi with them, a 1-up Mushroom hatches from the Egg instead. Unlike Baby Yoshis, full-grown Yoshis were trapped in their Eggs by Bowser.



Baby Yoshi

In the Star World, colored Yoshi Eggs can be found, which hatch Baby Yoshis of the corresponding color. Red, yellow, or blue Baby Yoshis can then be fed five enemies to turn them into adult Yoshis. Eating a power-up causes a Baby Yoshi to grow instantly.

Green Yoshis gain special abilities depending on the color of the Koopa shell currently held in their mouth. However, colored Yoshis gain a specific power regardless of the type of shell held in their mouth.

Berries

Eating Berries follows along with the color-specific effects: eating 10 Red Berries in the same stage causes Yoshi to lay an Egg containing a power-up; two Pink Berries produce a cloud that rains Coins from the sky; a Green Berry adds 20 seconds to the time limit.

Yoshi’s Wings

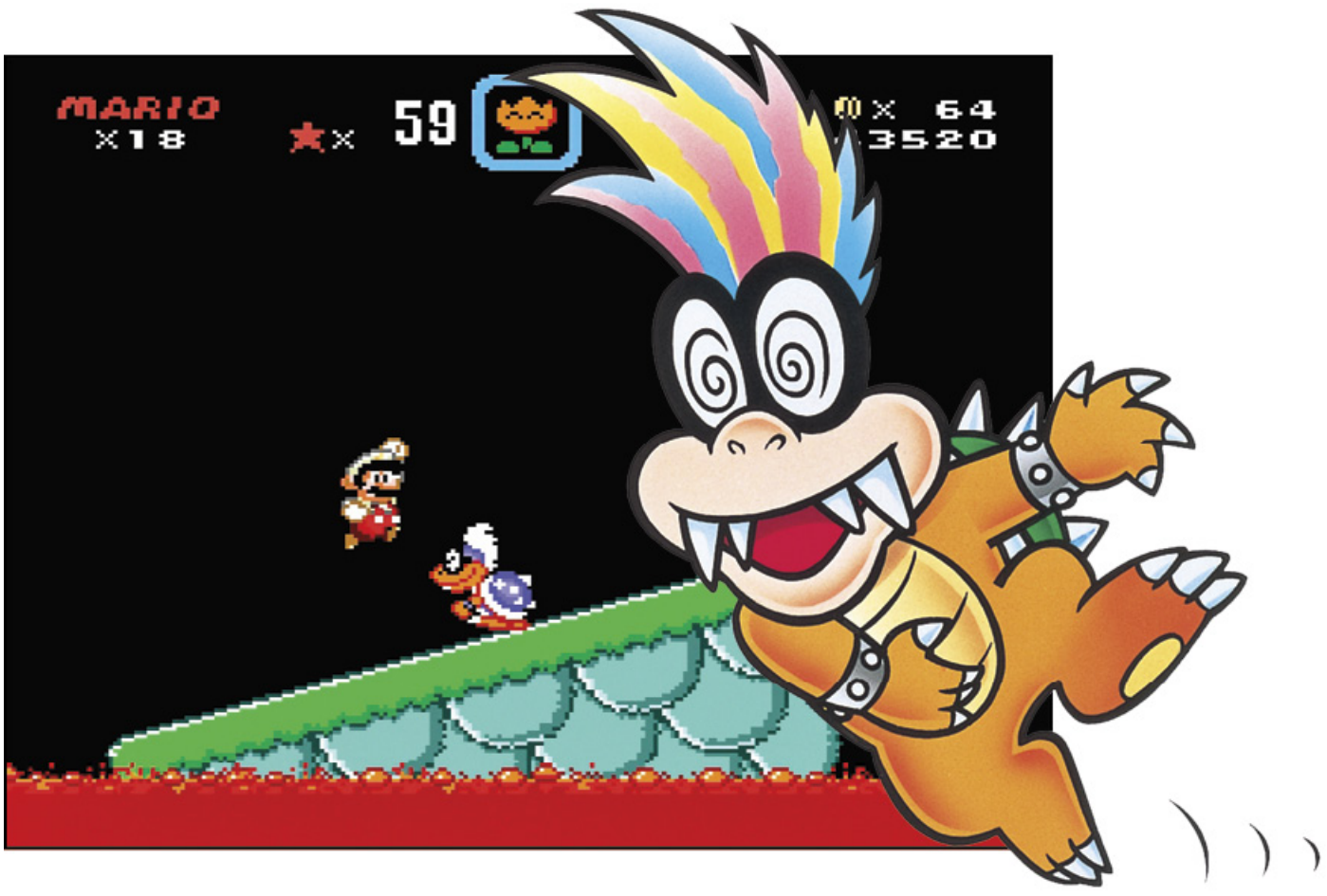
This rare item sends Yoshi (and Mario) shooting upward into the franchise’s recurring bonus area, Coin Heaven. Yoshi is automatically turned blue upon exiting, enabling players to obtain a Blue Yoshi before and outside of Star World.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World

World 1: Yoshi's Island

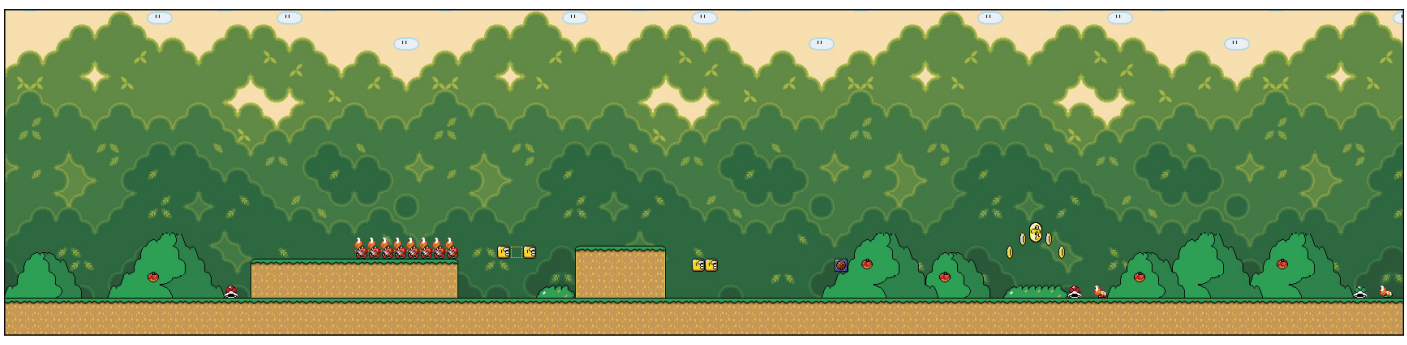
Boss: Iggy Koopa

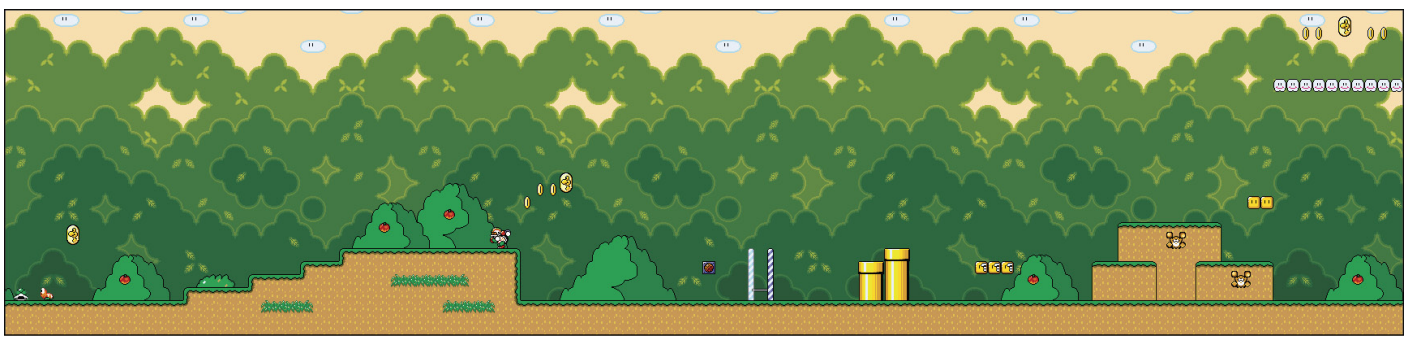


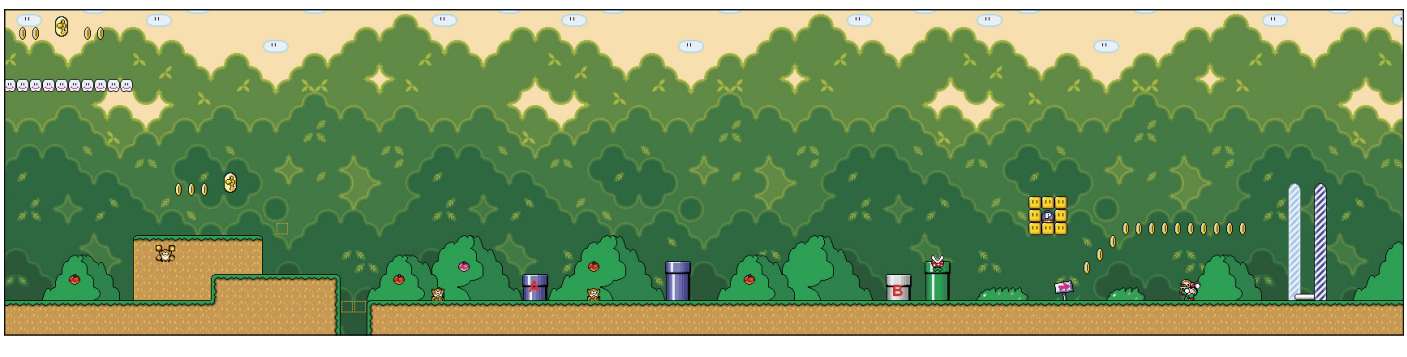
Featured Level:

YOSHI'S ISLAND 2

Yoshi's Island 2 serves as a straightforward introductory level, showcasing both new and familiar aspects of the series. Eight Koopa Troopas are lined up at the beginning of the stage, and Mario can use his new ability to grab and hold items to pick up an abandoned Red Shell and wreak havoc on the unsuspecting octuplet. This mechanic is then immediately subverted with a lone shell and a shell-less Koopa who jumps inside it if Mario's not fast enough, likely damaging over-eager first-time players.



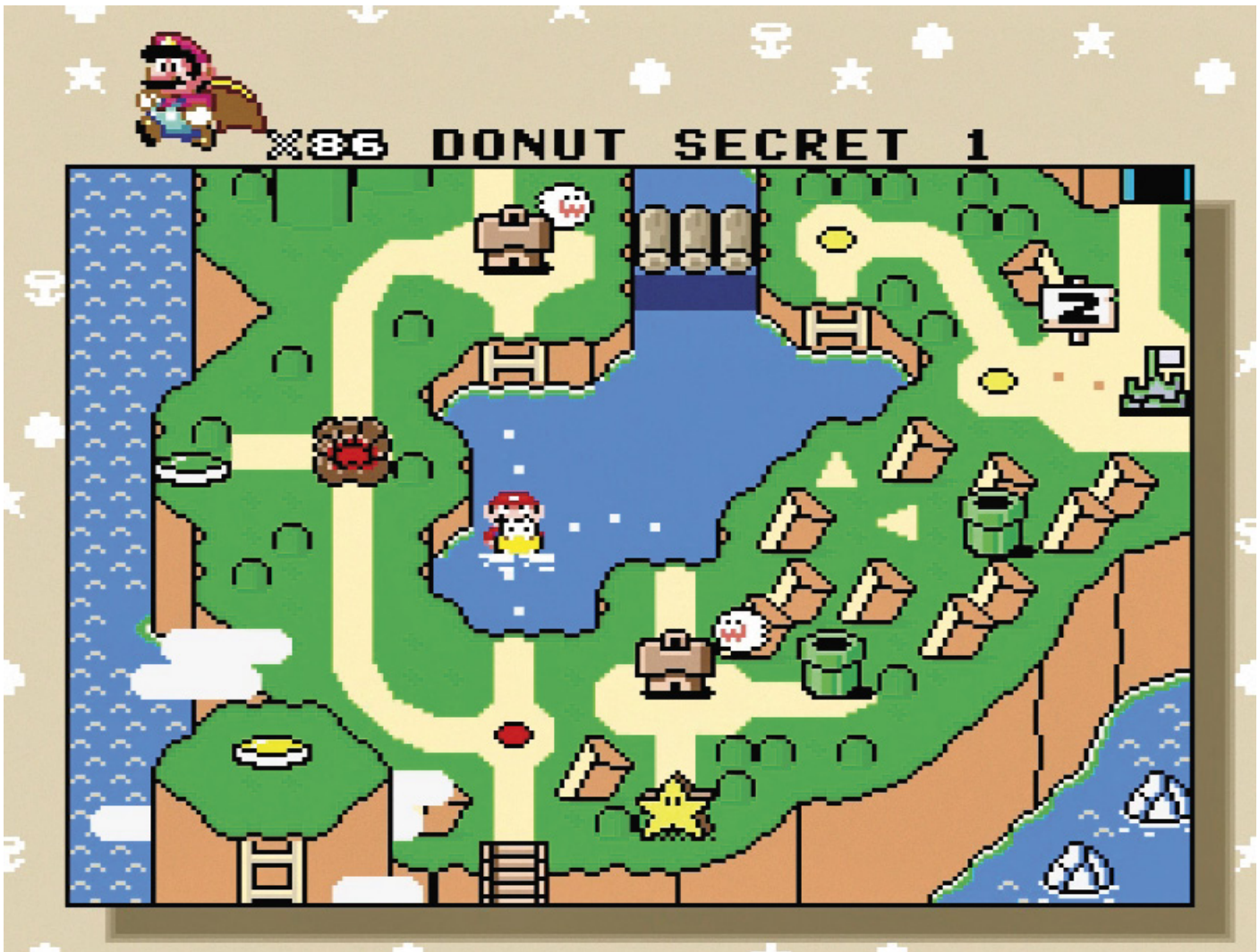




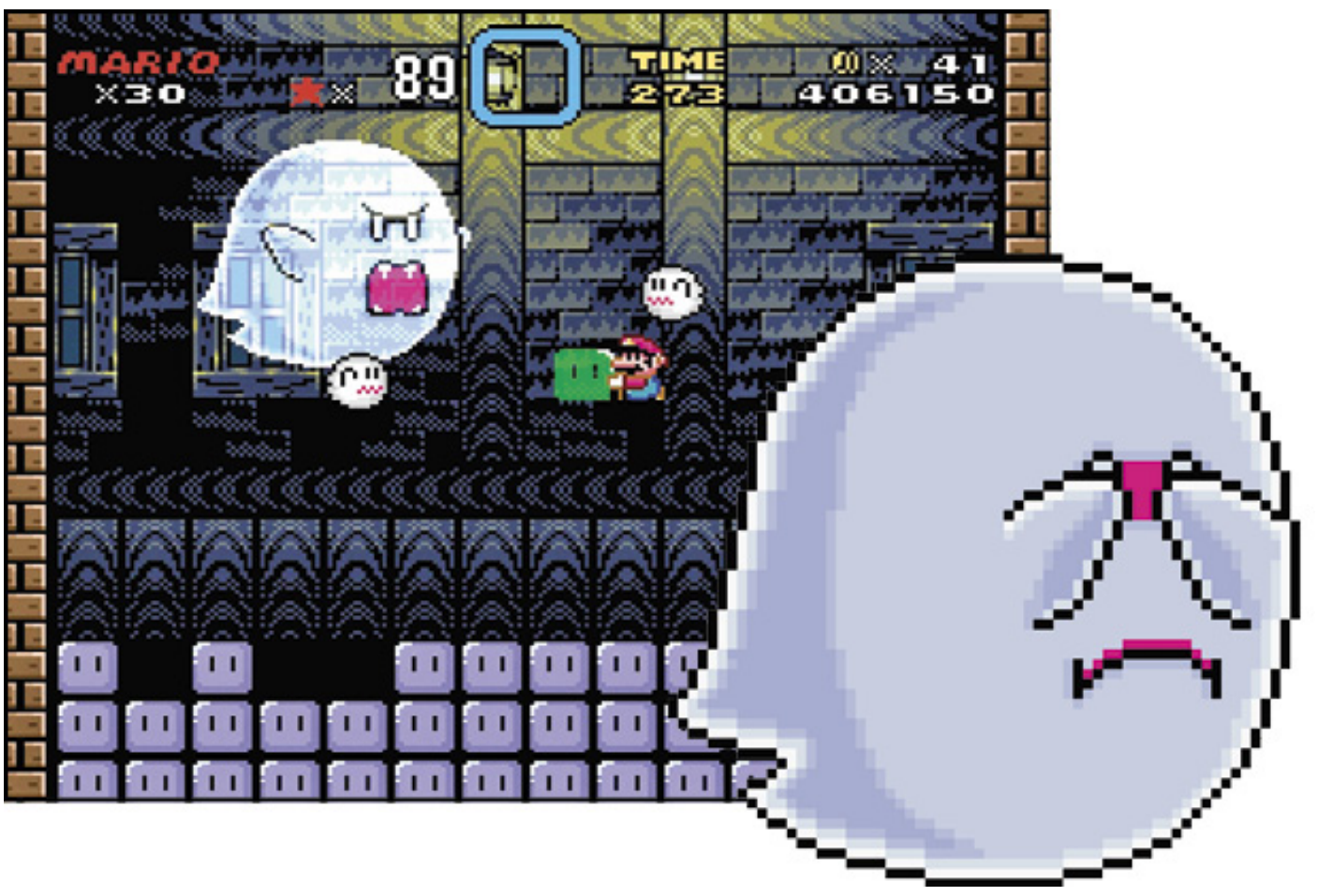
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World

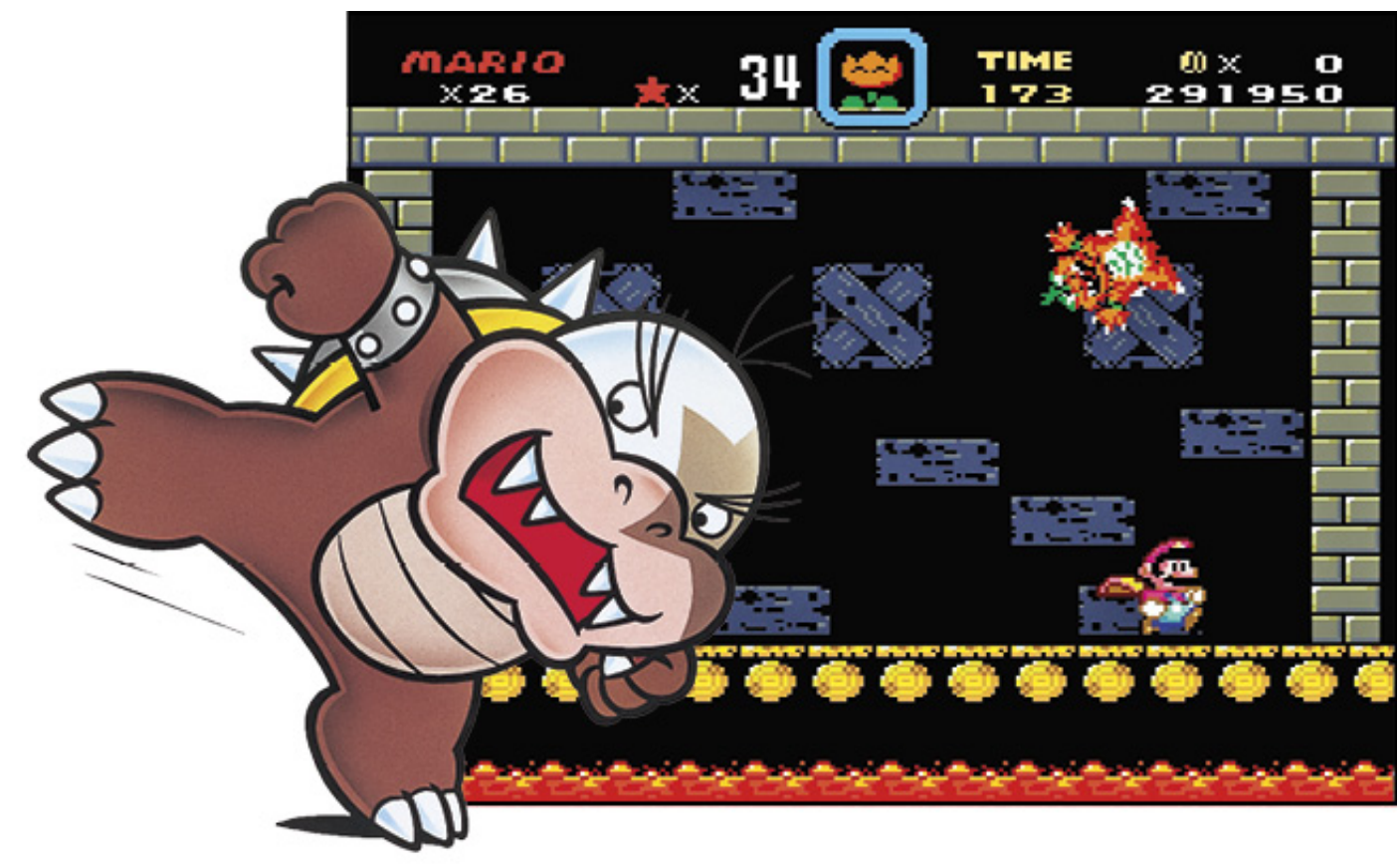
World 2: Donut Plains



Secret Boss: Big Boo



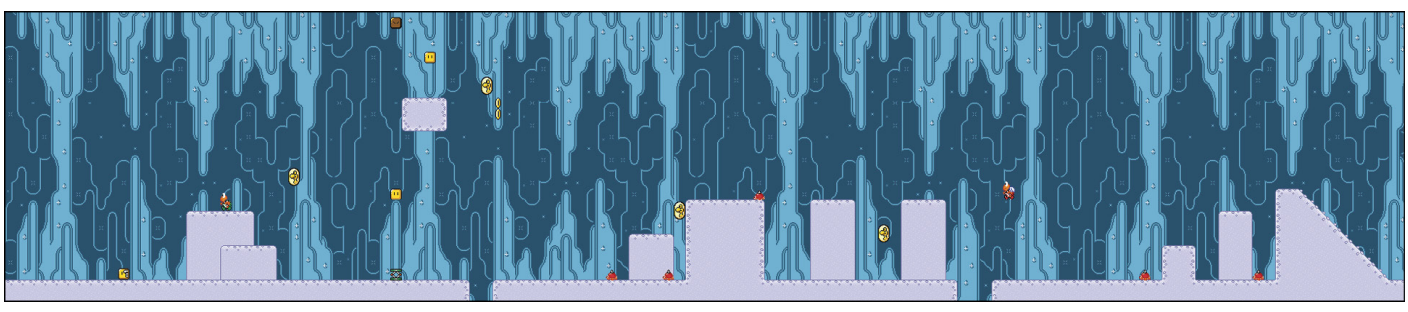
Boss: Morton Koopa Jr.

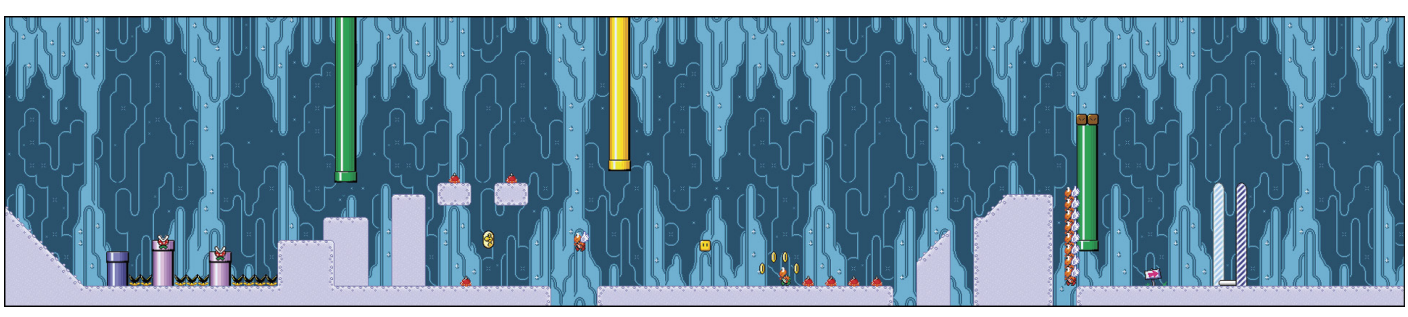


Featured Level:

DONUT SECRET 2

The player accesses Donut Secret 2 not from the Donut Plains overworld, but from a cliffside overlooking the final area of the game. It's a tantalizing tease of things to come, and one of many ways the game nudges the player to search high and low for secrets.

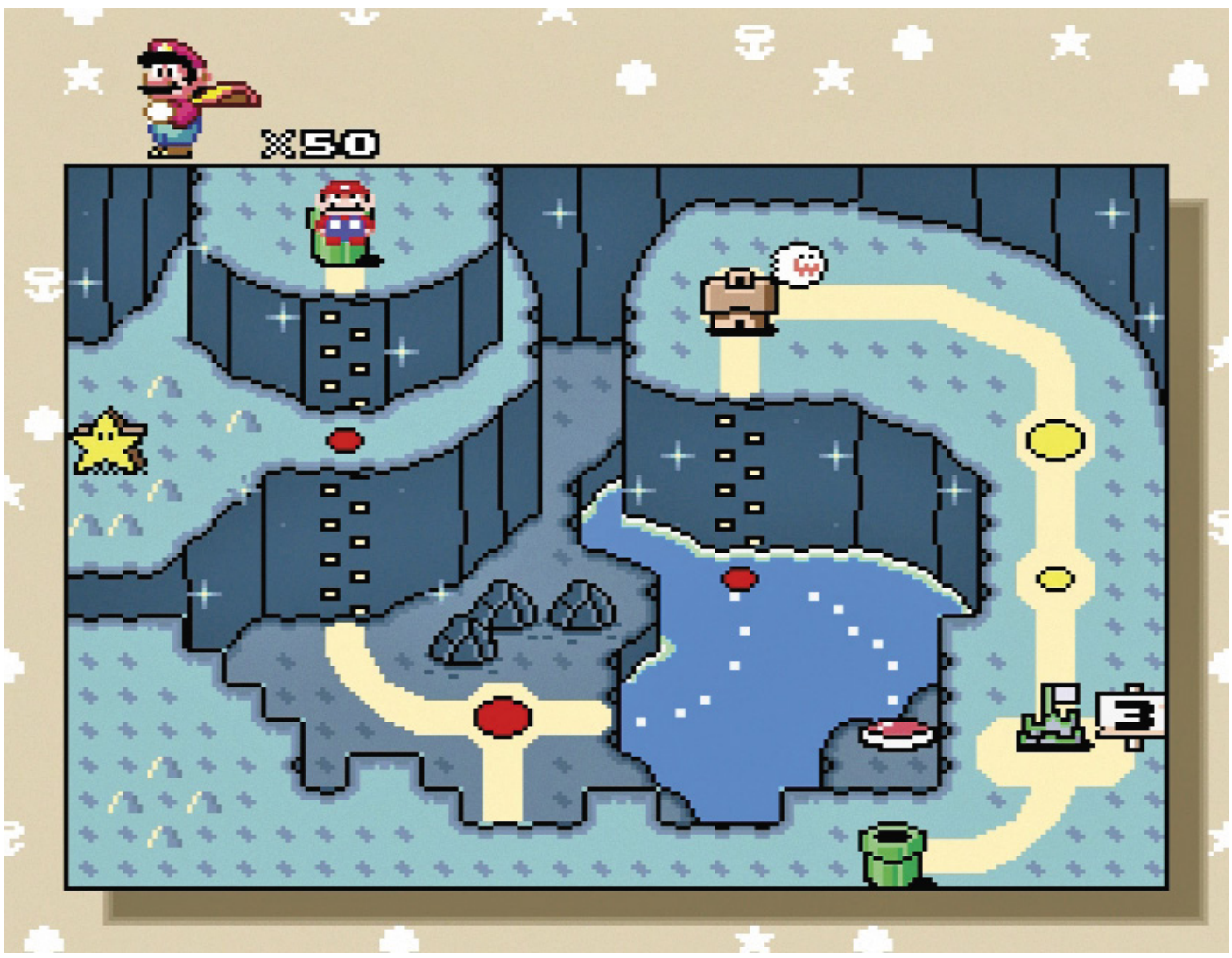




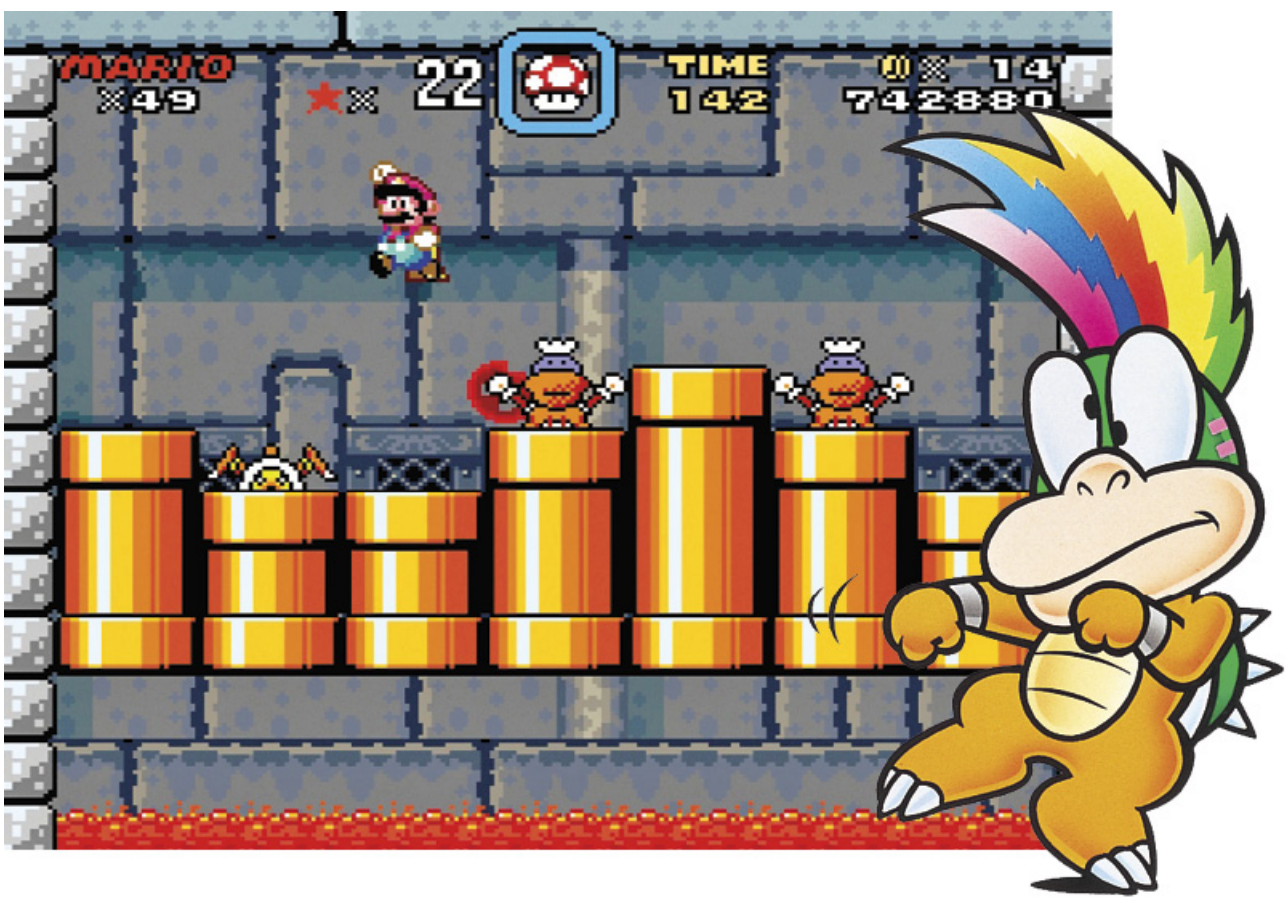
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World

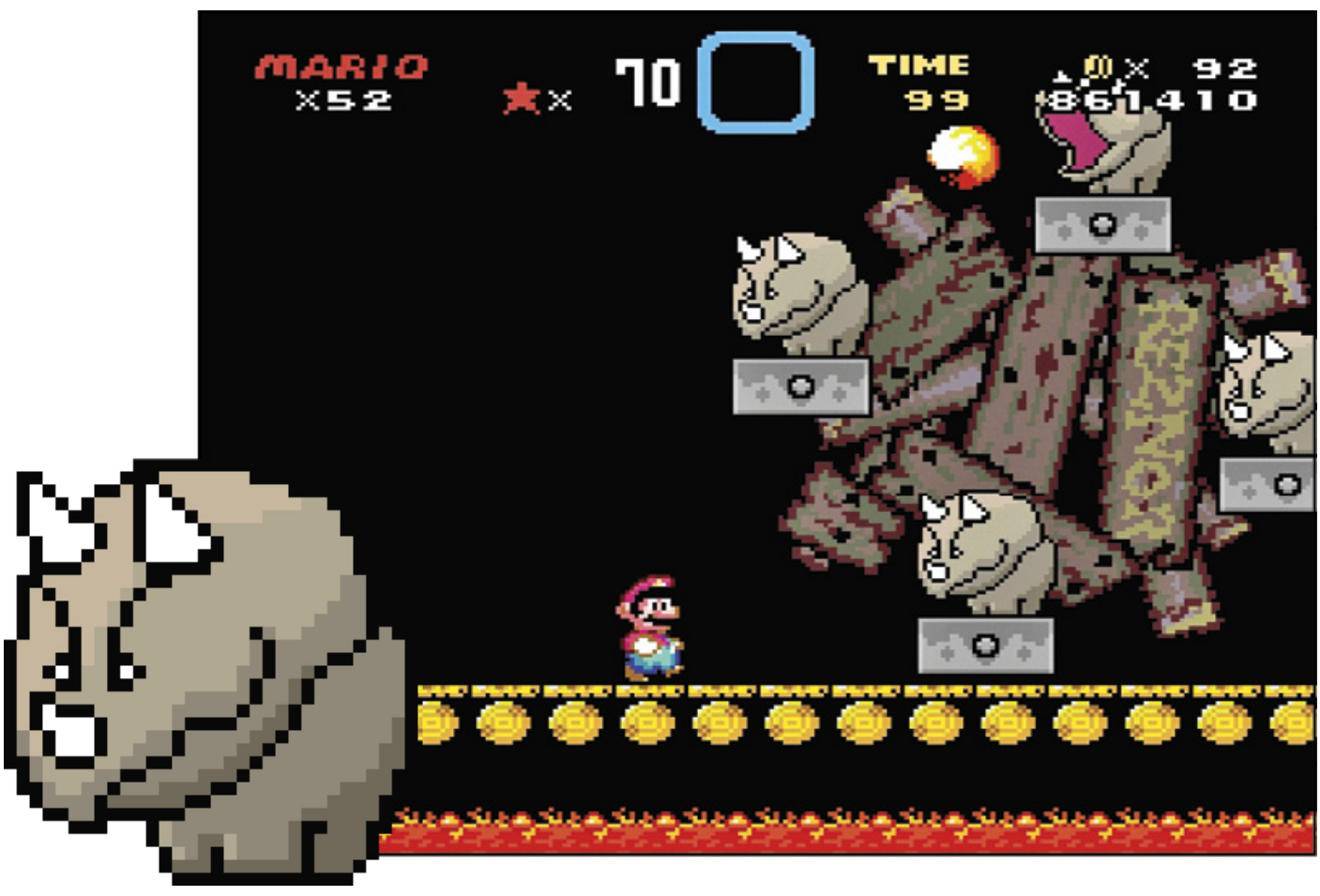
World 3: Vanilla Dome



Boss: Lemmy Koopa



Fortress Boss: Reznor

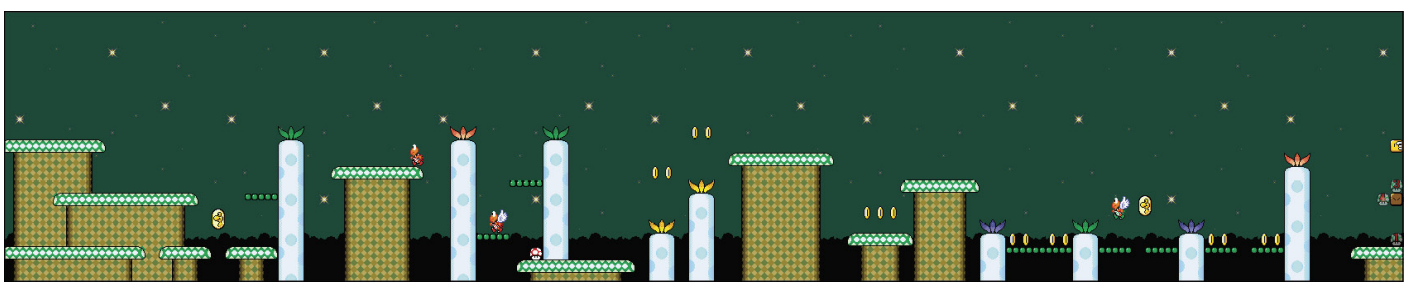


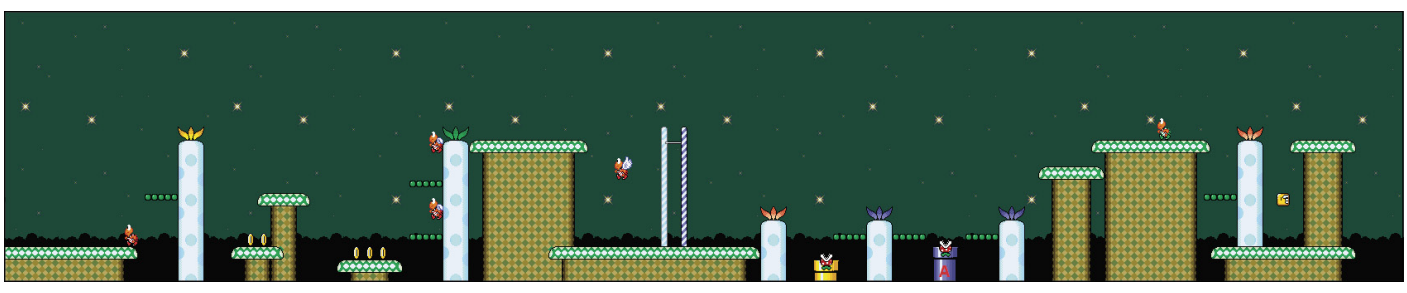
Named after Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor during Nintendo of America's English localization process, this quartet of fire-breathing triceratops sits perched on rotating platforms. Mario must hit the platforms below to knock off each Reznor before the floor completely breaks away. Reznors reappear as the bosses of all four fortresses in the game.

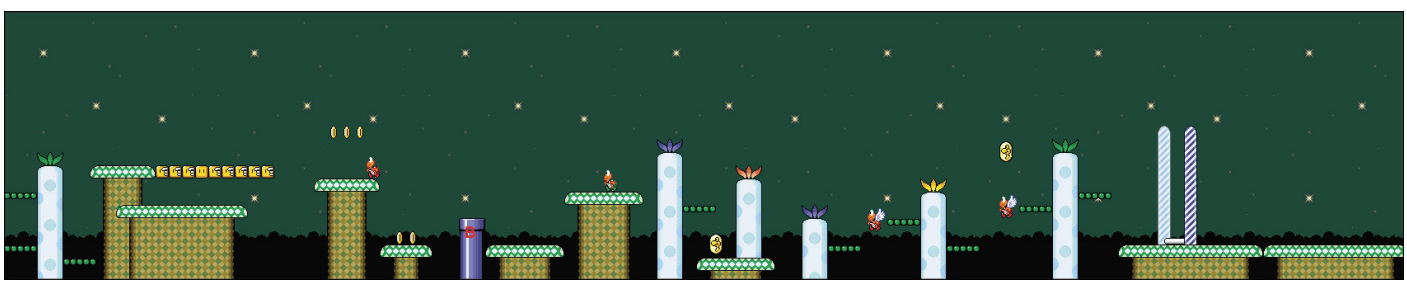
Featured Level:

VANILLA DOME 4

Vanilla Dome 4 is set to a backdrop of glimmering stars. Brightly colored green and white platforms are offset just enough to create a relentless series of bottomless pits for any careless Marios to fall in. A warp pipe transports players far below, to an underground area filled with lava, further contributing to the levels' contrasting visuals.





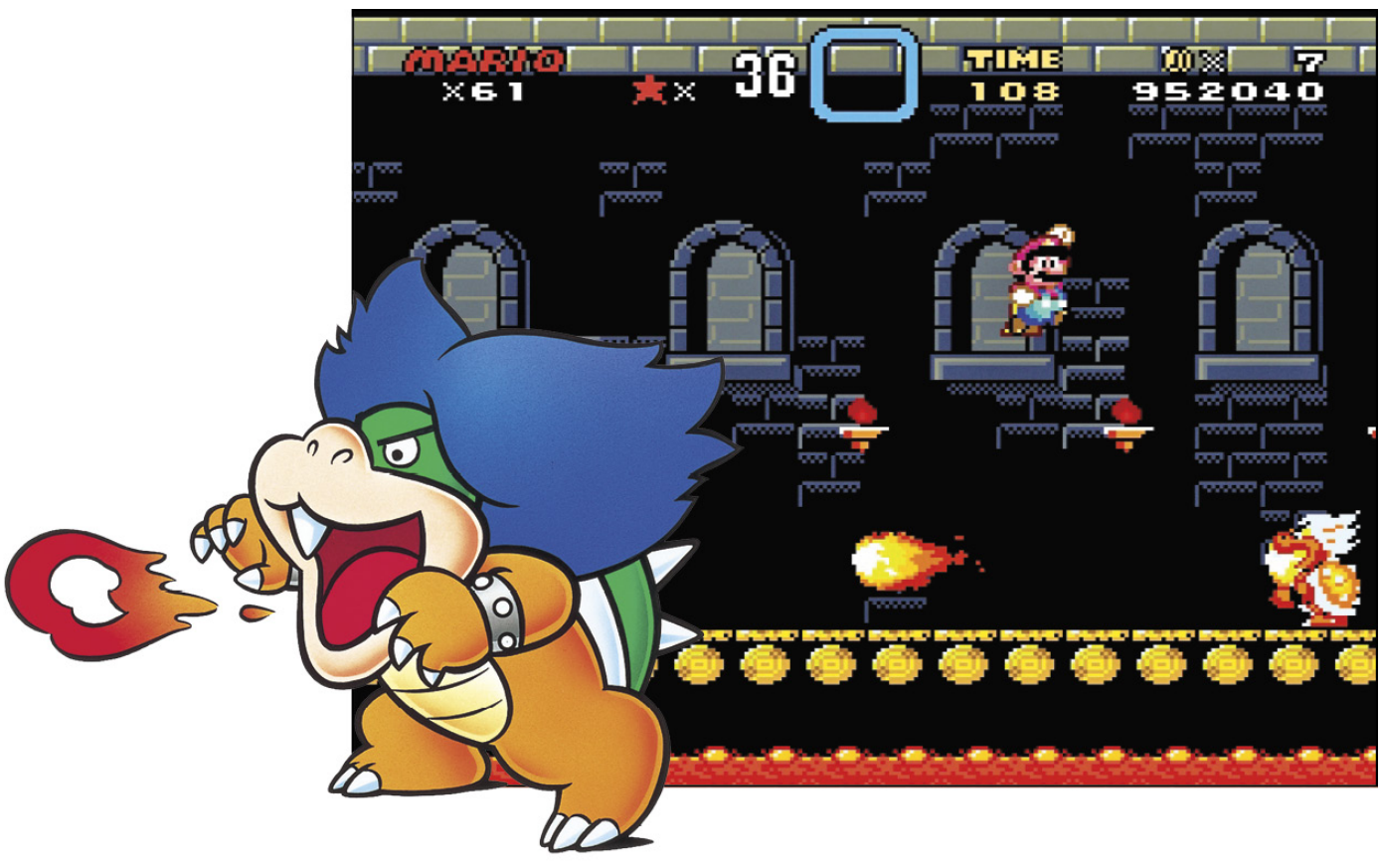


Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World

World 4: Twin Bridges

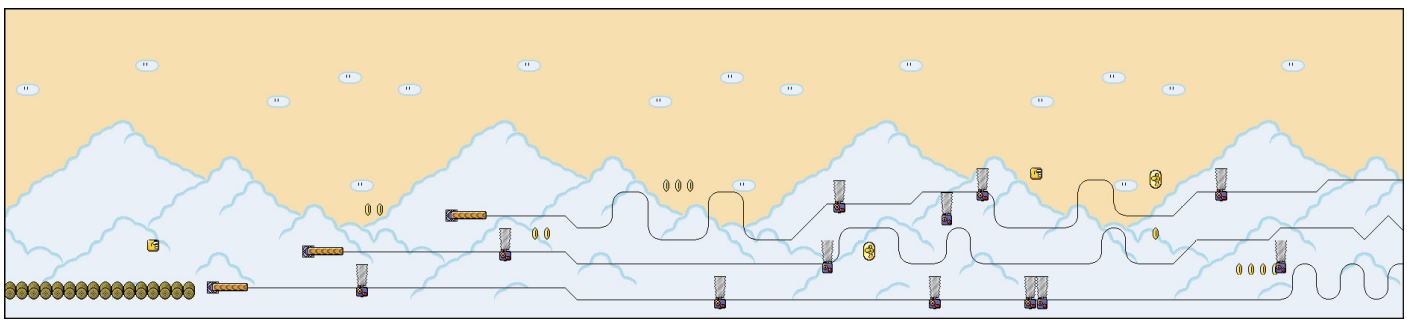
Boss: Ludwig Von Koopa

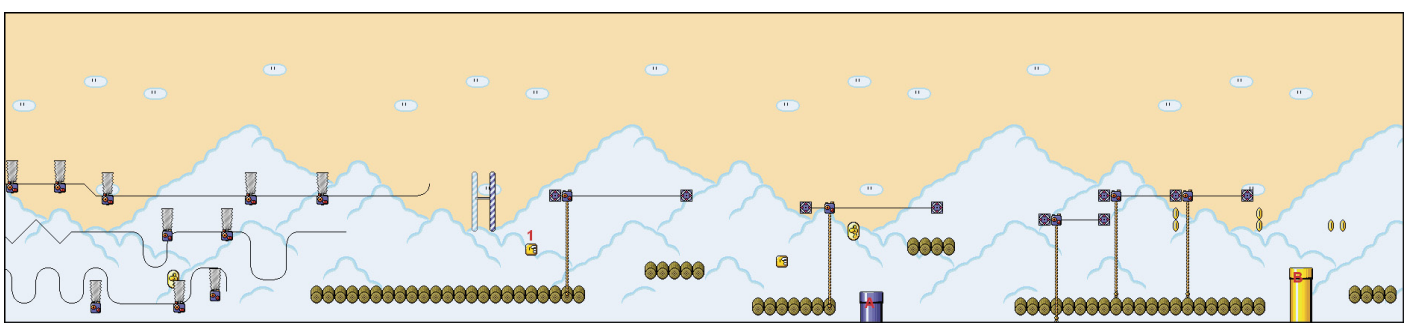


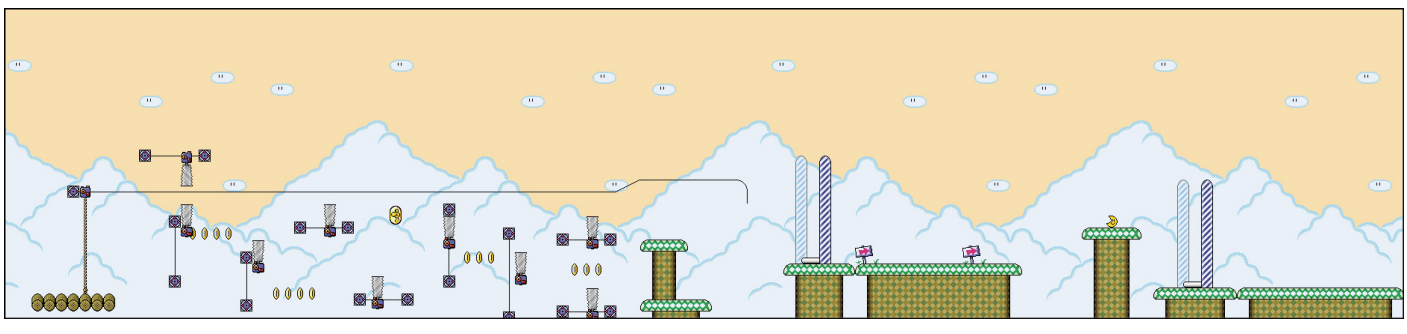
Featured Level:

CHEESE BRIDGE AREA

This level's name perfectly describes what to expect, if by "cheese" you expect dozens of chainsaws, and by "bridge" you expect literally no bridge at all. Consider bringing a Cape Feather and flying over the entire level—we won't tell!



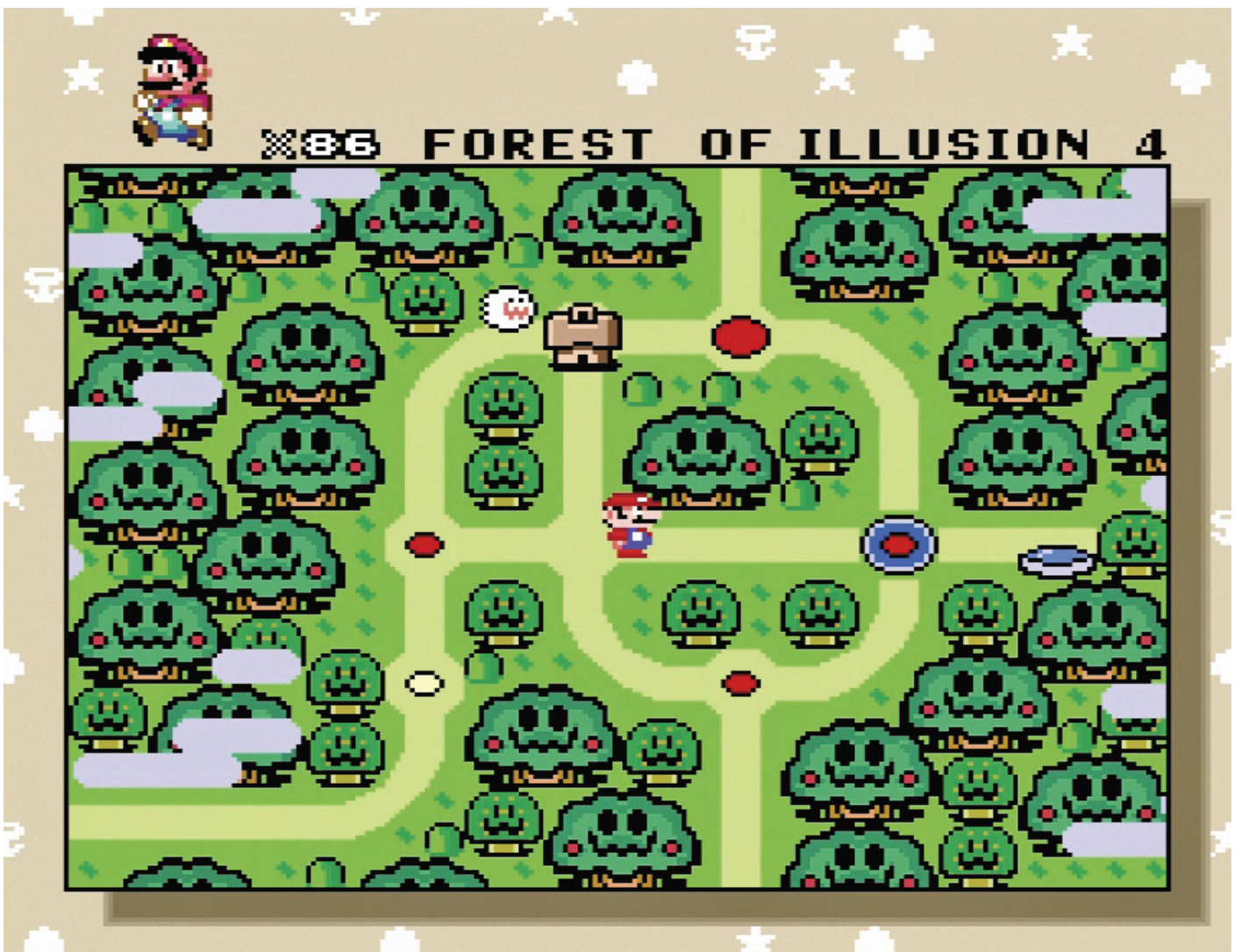




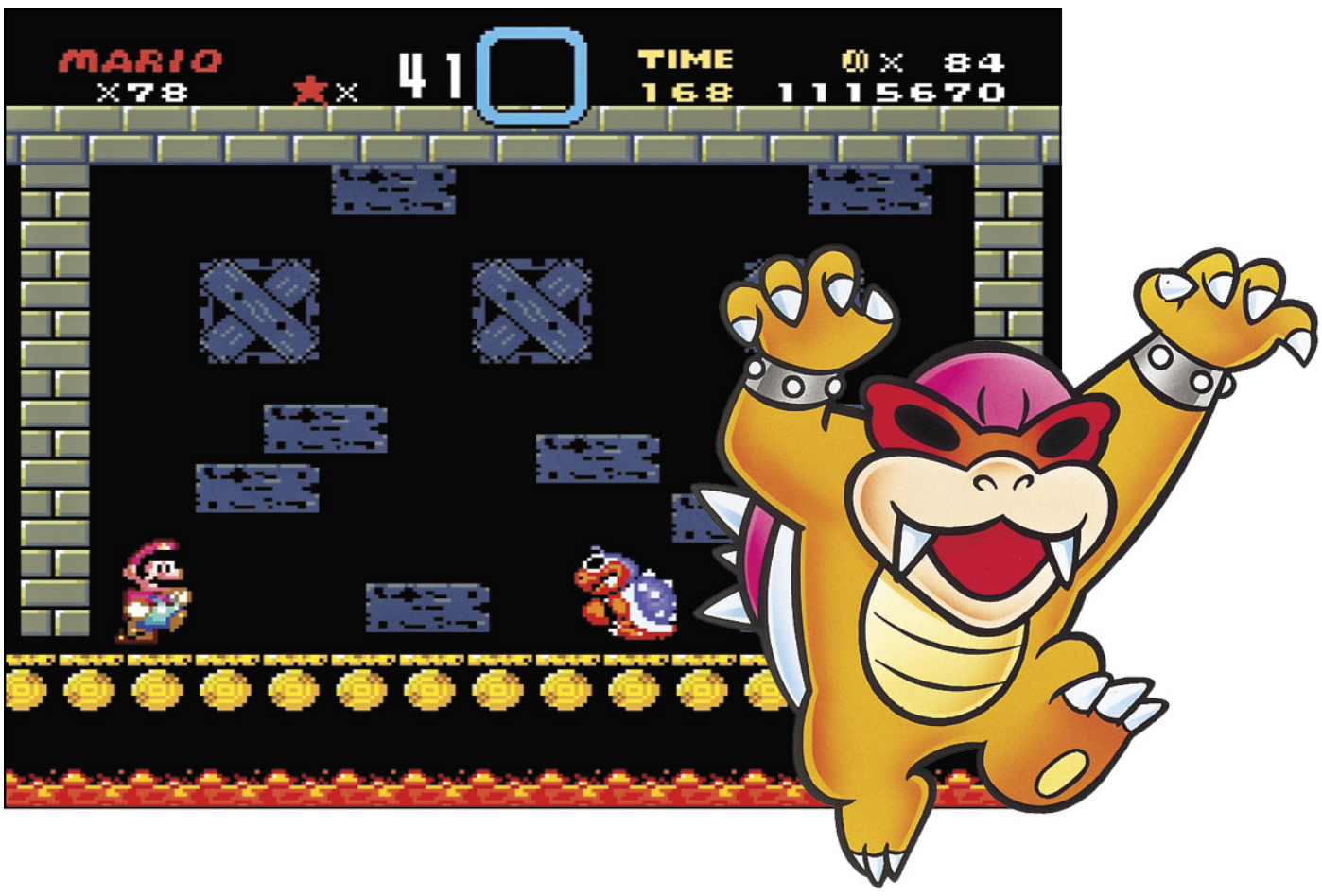
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World

World 5: Forest of Illusion



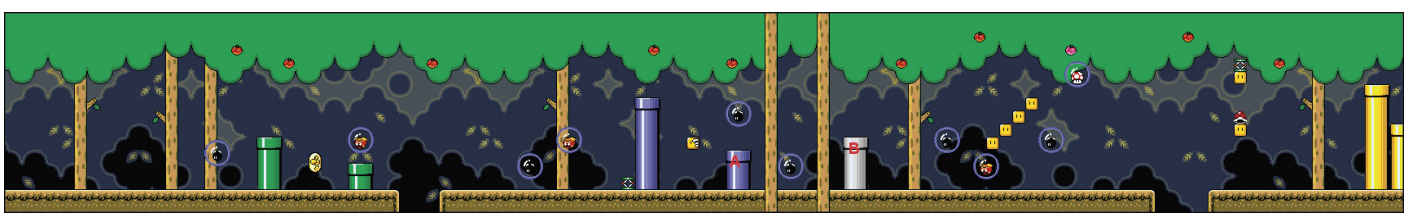
Boss: Roy Koopa

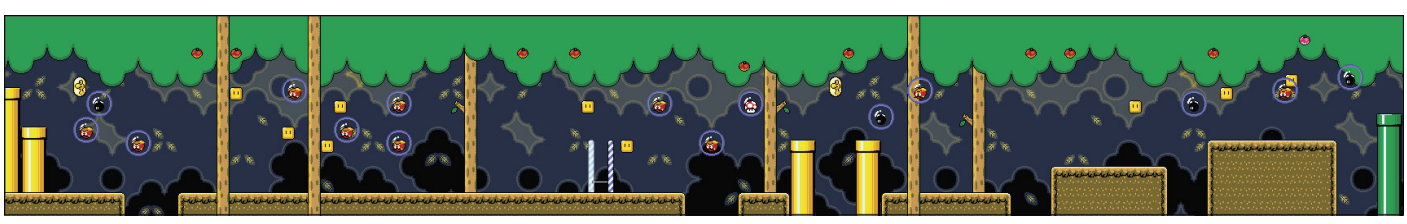


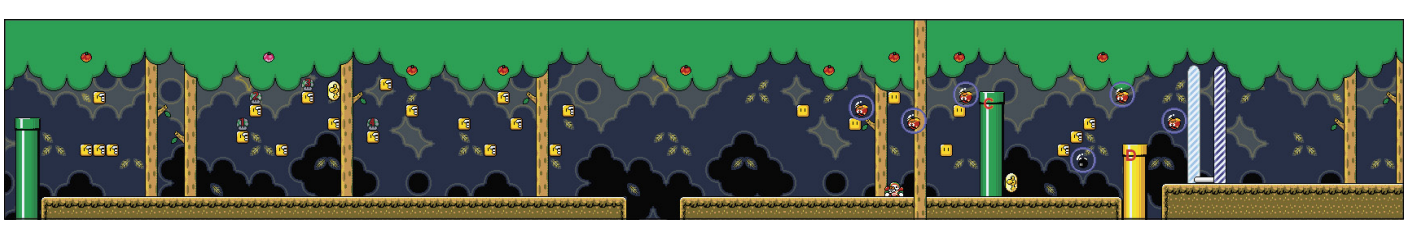
Featured Level:

FOREST OF ILLUSION 3

Pipes, Berries, Blocks, and Bubbles! Mario better watch his step or he's in for troubles! ...I'll leave.





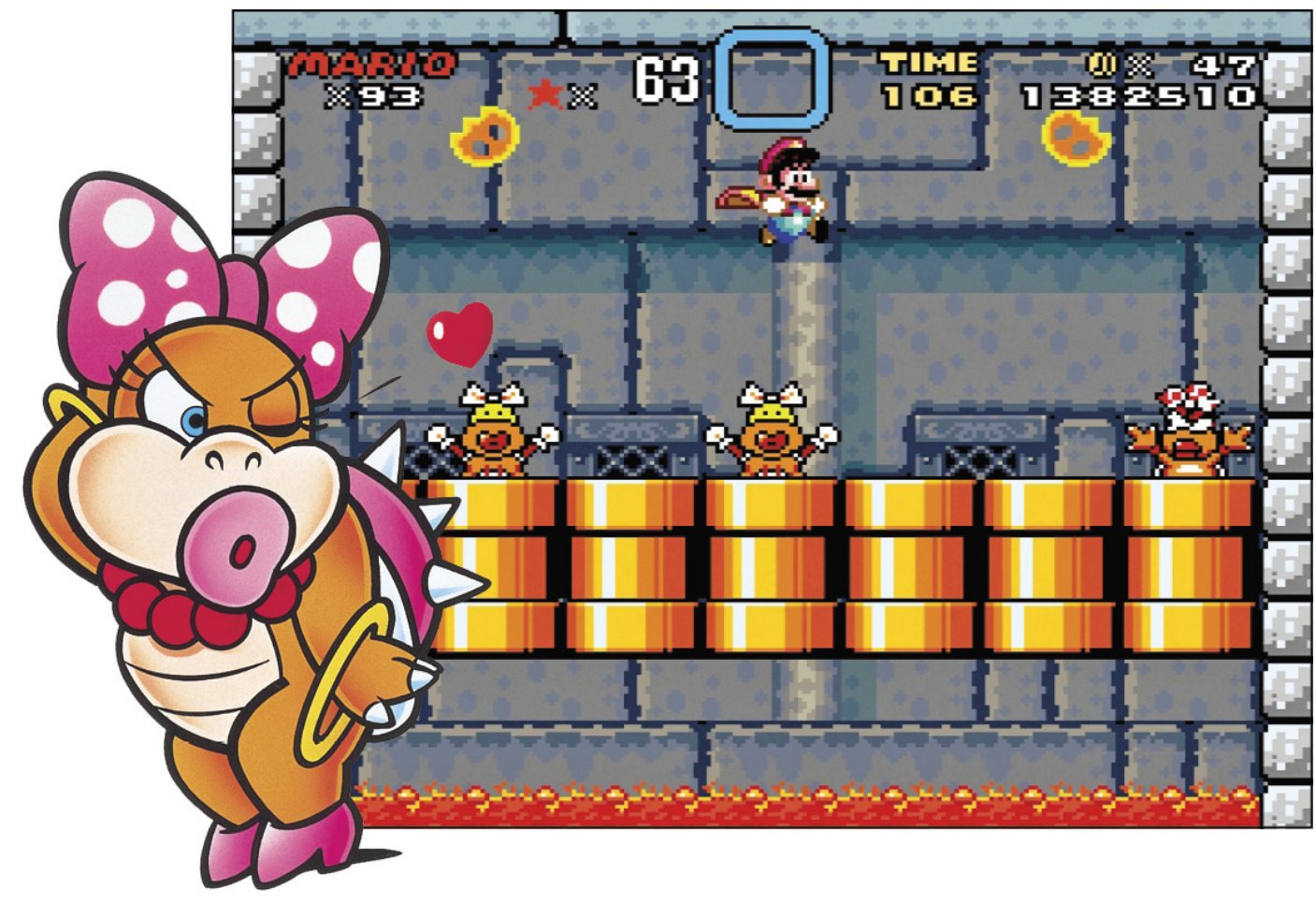


Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World

World 6: Chocolate Island

Boss: Wendy O. Koopa

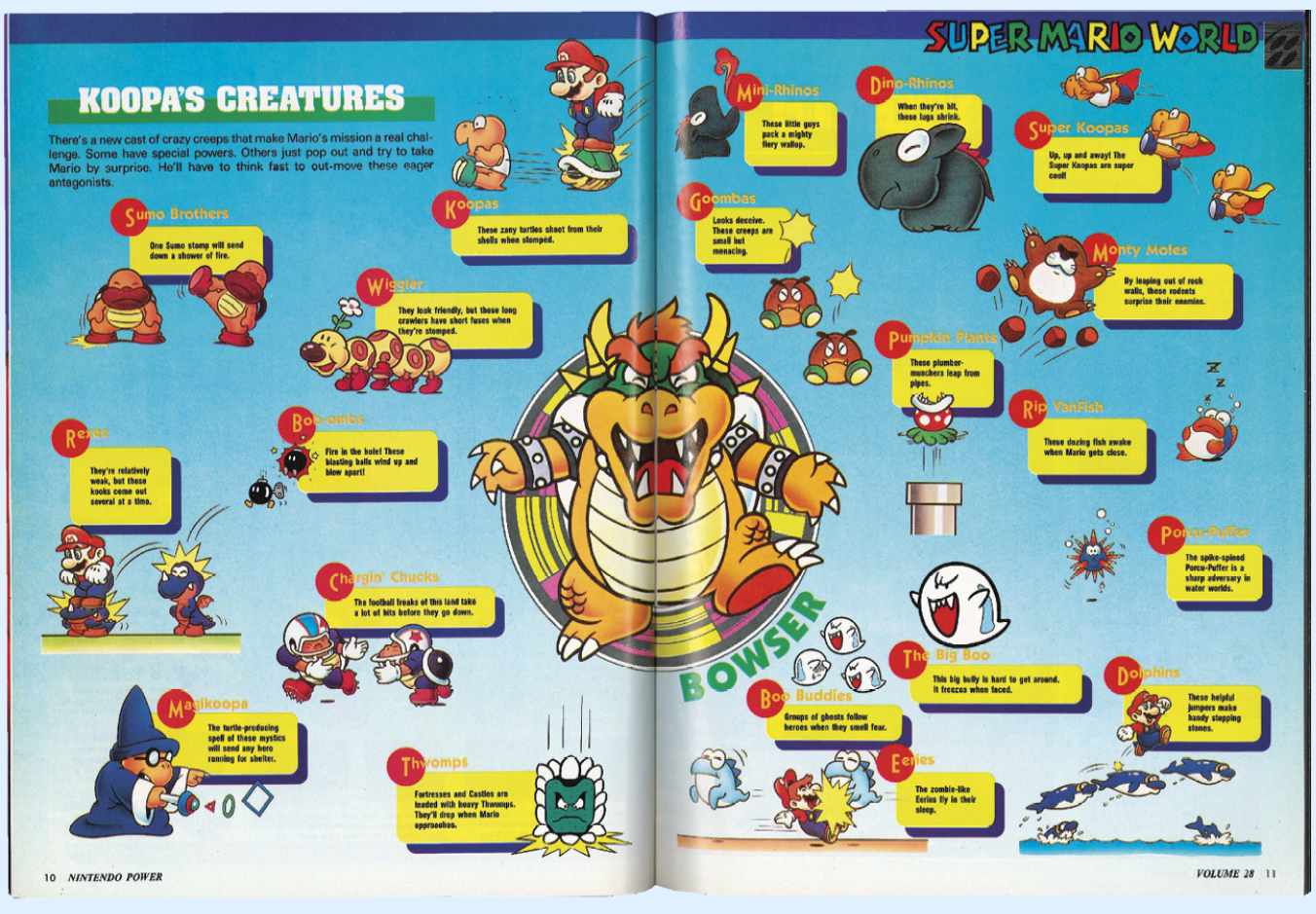


Featured Level:

CHOCOLATE ISLAND 4

Mmm, chocolate...

SUPER NOSTALGIA



Bowser had a veritable army on his side in this adventure, and all of them were ready to make Mario's journey even more perilous.

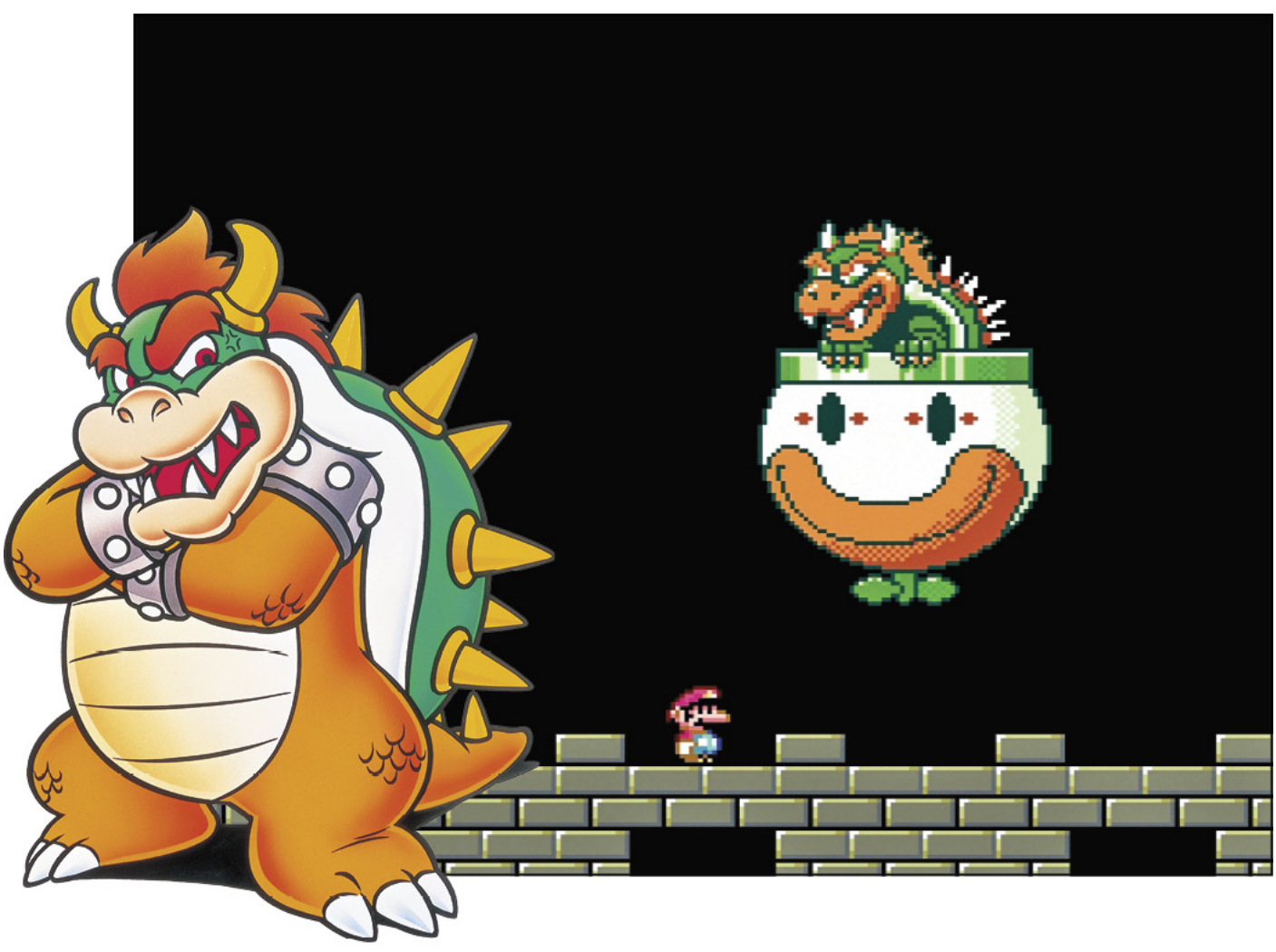
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World

World 7: Valley of Bowser

Boss: Larry Koopa

Final Boss: Bowser

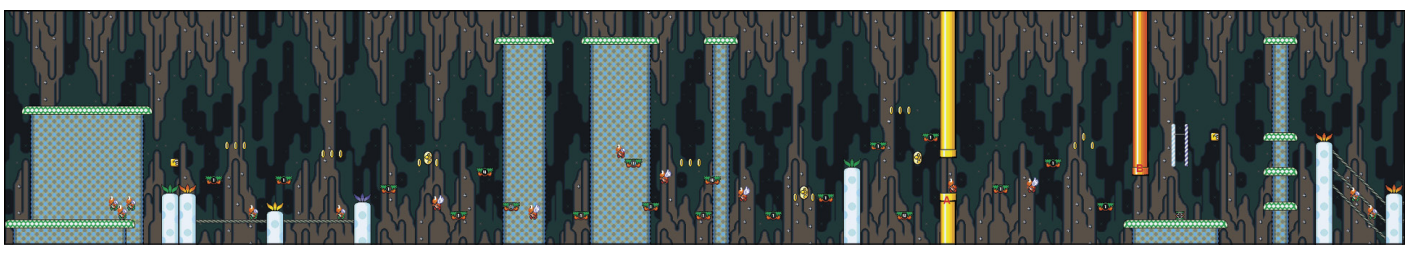


Mario must face off against Bowser and his Koopa Clown Car. Although it's really more of a Koopa Clown Copter, it has the same magical properties as a circus clown's vehicle of choice: Bowser somehow fits multiple giant bowling balls (known as Big Steelies), countless Mechakoopas, Princess Toadstool, and himself inside. By tossing the Mechakoopas up and over onto Bowser's head, Mario eventually prevails and rescues the princess, only to realize he's going to have to do it all over again soon.

Featured Level:

VALLEY OF BOWSER 3

At this point the game presumes you're a plumber proficiently practiced in the art of platforming. Exclusive to this level are platforms scattered among Koopa Paratroopas that plummet into the abyss below after a brief countdown.



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

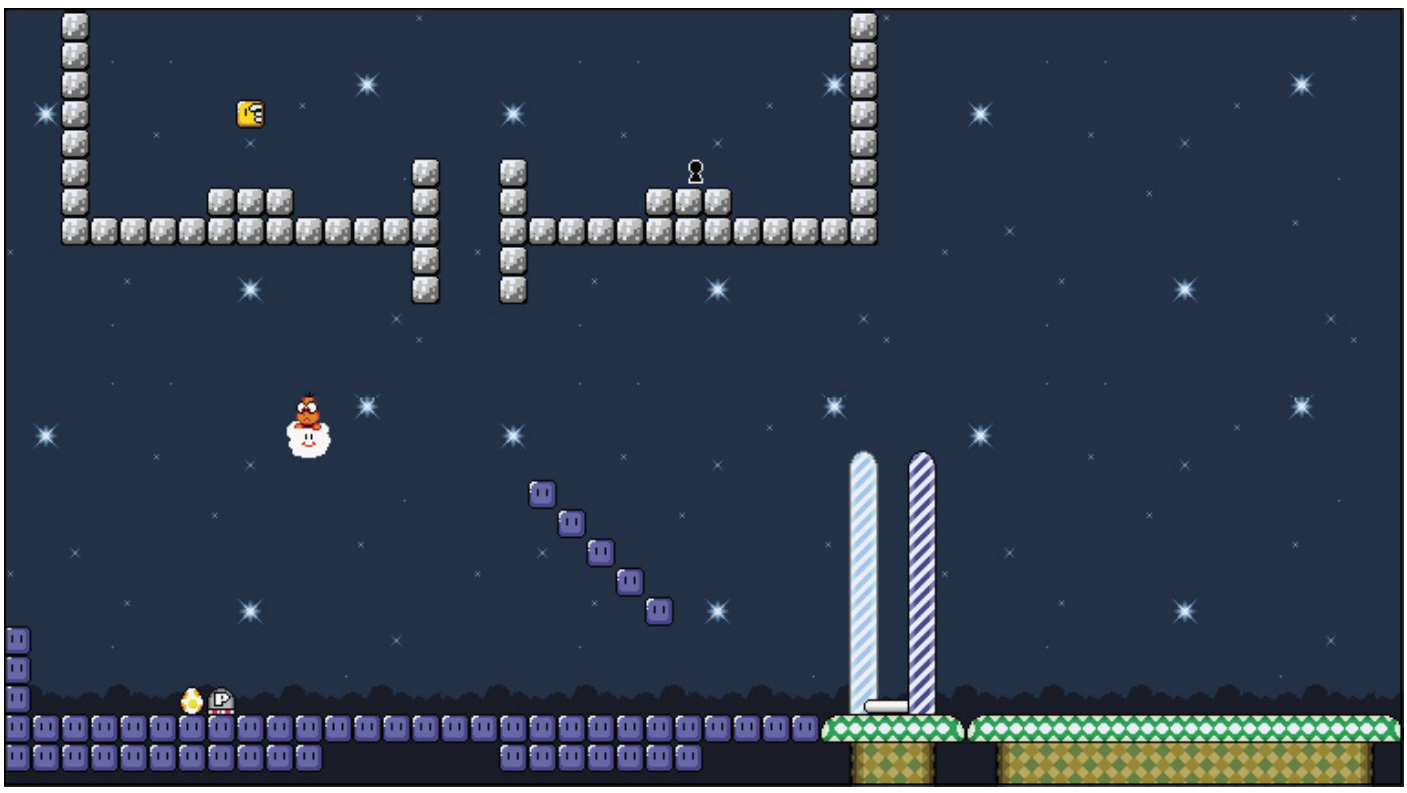
Super Mario World

World 8: Star World

Featured Level:

STAR WORLD 3

Star World 3 stands out as the smallest level in the game, but not necessarily the easiest. The game attempts to distract the player with a rare Baby Yellow Yoshi, a P-Switch, and a floor made entirely of Grab Blocks, but the solution is to simply dispose of the Lakitu and ride his cloud to the keyhole in the sky. For precision flyers, Cape Mario is always an option as well.



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

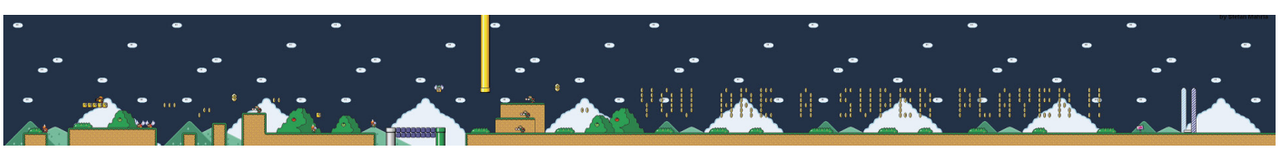
Super Mario World

World 9: Special World

Featured Level:

FUNKY

Intended as the final stage of the entire game, completing Funky changes the overworld's season from Spring to Fall. The level consists largely of various Chucks and Sumo Brothers, with a message written in Coins that spells out "You are a super player!!" as Mario heads down the final stretch.



Funky features nine ultra-rare Green Berries, each of which extends the timer by 20 seconds. If the player waits until the timer reaches 100 and the sped-up music is triggered, then eats a Green Berry, the timer is pushed back over 100 but the music's speed remains. This can be done with each of the Green Berries, making the music hilariously fast.

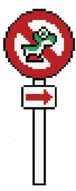
1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

Subtitled *Super Mario Bros. 4* for its original Japanese release, the Super Famicom box art emphasized Mario's new pal just as the international box art did.

2 WINGED RED COIN

Super Mario World has an unused flying Red Coin stored in its memory. Taking a page out of Link's playbook, the Red Coin would have been worth more than a normal Coin (five). The Red Coin would eventually make its official debut in *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island*, sans wings and with different functionality. It would go on to become a staple in the *Mario* franchise, often requiring the player to collect all 5–20 in each level to unlock a bonus of some sort.

Not to be outdone by its crimson counterpart, there is an unused Blue Coin in the game's code as well. This Coin has the unusual effect of turning into a Magenta Block when the player hits a P-Switch.



3 NO YOSHI SIGN

In the final game Yoshi cannot enter certain areas such as Ghost Houses and Castles. However, an unused graphic would have made the "No Yoshis Allowed" message a little more blatant.

4 HIDING KOOPA TROOPA

Yet another item that didn't make the game's final release is a Block that spawns a Koopa Troopa hiding inside its shell. This Koopa can't be hurt by fireballs.

5 TINY DOORS

Digging even deeper into the game's code reveals tiny doors that Mario could only enter when he was small. This would have been an interesting mix-up to the standard gameplay, which, understandably, never openly rewards you for avoiding power-ups.

6 COMPANION BIRD AND LAKITU

At one point, two different characters would follow Mario around the world map. The first was a blue bird (also seen carrying an unused flying cage), and the second was a Lakitu.

7 YOSHI DUST

There is a special effect that would have had dust poof out when saddling a Yoshi. Though this effect was disabled in the final release, it could be re-enabled with a Game Genie.

8 FIREBALL ATTACKS

A few notable enemies have fireball animations in the game code, but do not use fireballs in the final game. These include Koopalings Roy and Morton, as well as the Dino Rhinos. This is further backed by the fact that Dino Rhinos can breathe fire when in their smaller Dino-Torch form, and are immune to fireballs themselves.

9 DINO RHINO CAMEO

Speaking of Dino Rhinos, their sprite was re-used in the *Super Mario All-Stars* version of *Super Mario Bros. 3*, where the Water Land king has been transformed into a purple Dino Rhino.

10 DOLPHIN SNACK

In the Japanese release of *Super Mario World*, Yoshi could eat the friendly dolphins that appear in two levels, but in the US release this was disallowed. The decision was reversed in future re-releases such as *Super Mario Advance 2*, should Yoshi be in the mood for seafood.

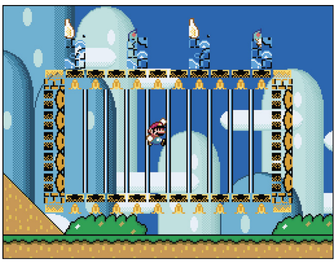
11 FOREST OF ILLUSION

In Japanese the Forest of Illusion shares the same name as the Lost Woods from *The Legend of Zelda* series. Likewise, both have similar mechanics of being difficult to navigate, repeating the same screens or areas, and both franchises were originally developed by much of the same staff.

12 SWOOPERS

Though the bat-like Swoopers appear green in the game, there's a scrapped blue version still partially viewable in the game's code. In all subsequent *Mario* games, Swoopers are, in fact, blue.

13 FLYING CAGE



One of the more fascinating mysteries buried inside the game's code is a large, flying bird cage. The cage would have housed Mario as birds carried him through an auto-scrolling level. Incoming obstacles and enemies would need to be dodged from inside the cage.

14 IGGY'S DO

Perhaps the most egregious oversight in gaming history, Iggy Koopa's mohawk is reversed when you battle him, mirroring Larry's hairstyle. Yet in *Super Mario Bros. 3*, as well as *Super Mario World*'s credits, Iggy is shown with his signature forward mohawk. The correct mohawk graphics appear in the game's code despite not being used.

15 WACKY WORLDS

A sequel titled *Super Mario's Wacky Worlds* was in development by developer NovaLogic for the Philips CD-i but was ultimately canceled due to the console's poor sales. Mario could be seen visiting ancient Greek- and Egyptian-themed worlds. Three prototypes of the unfinished game are said to be in circulation, with one selling for as much as $1,000 on eBay.

16 DANCING MARIO

Once you defeat Bowser, holding L+R+X+Y+Up until the credits begin causes Mario to do a funny dance instead of his normal walk animation.

Video is restricted

Video is restricted

Speedrunner Truman and Speedrunner Bramz

Super Mario World's immediate accessibility and long-running popularity make it a prime candidate for speedrunning. The tight controls and short levels provide the ideal playground for endless experimentation and reiteration. And the game's charming visuals and catchy music never seem to get old even after playing hundreds of times through, as is the case for the most dedicated speedrunners.

Super Mario World categorizes its speedruns slightly differently than the usual Any% and 100% titles used for most other games. Instead, it focuses on exits, of which there are 96 total in the game. For instance, Donut Plains 1's normal exit leads to Donut Plains 2, but there is a second, secret exit that opens up Donut Secret 1. So for the 96 Exit category of speedrun, the player must clear all 96 exits and the run ends when Peach appears after defeating Bowser. Currently this can be done in under an hour and a half. There is also an 11 Exit category, which can be done in under 10 minutes. Over the years, new types of runs have been invented by the community to create new challenges and provide more variety. These can include restrictions such as not using the Cape, which drastically changes how the speedrun plays out, or only allowing small Mario, meaning a single hit can end a run.

The most-mind-bending category is the 0 Exit, which uses a series of pixel-perfect movements and actions to manipulate the game's memory, sending the player from the first stage directly to the end credits. This can be done in under a minute and 15 seconds, though very few players have actually pulled it off, let alone quickly.

On the following pages, Truman and Bramz, two high-level *Super Mario World* speedrunners, provide various tips and tricks for achieving unthinkably quick completion times in this beloved game. Born after the game's original release, Truman and Bramz both experienced *Super Mario World* first through its Game Boy Advance port, *Super Mario Advance 2*. Many, many years later, upon discovering speedrunning, they returned to the classic. "The nostalgia from my childhood is what made me initially want to speedrun the game," said Truman. "But after starting to run, what has really kept me around is the great community."

"I spent about two months off and on learning the basic strats for 11 Exit, using a notepad document to keep track of my best times for each level," said Bramz. "I would study other people's runs and hop in Twitch chats asking questions to experienced runners. Luckily, *Super Mario World* has an amazing community and plenty of extremely useful resources that make learning the game a breeze." That said, Bramz explains that it wasn't an overnight success story. "At the time I thought [my first runs] were amazing, but looking back on them now the only word I can come up with is 'trainwreck.' But I was definitely having fun when I started learning and was always encouraged to beat my times."

Basic

Truman

Capeology 101

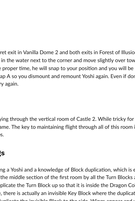
The Cape Feather is the most useful power-up in all of *Super Mario World*. Using the Cape alters gameplay so much that most major categories have a no-Cape variant on the leaderboards. The most obvious use of the Cape is to fly over levels, since you are able to remain in the air indefinitely. Some levels have hazards in the ceiling to try and prevent you from doing this, but they are usually available and most levels don't even have them.

Building off of this, you are also able to maintain your takeoff meter through both doors and pipes. This means that if you enter a door or pipe within 80 frames of your initial takeoff, you can jump after you exit the other side and start flying immediately. You can combine this mechanic with the cannon pipes in the game to fly at a speed higher than what was intended by the developers. In addition, you can use the Cape to skip cycles in levels such as Morton's Castle by maintaining your takeoff meter.

The Cape can also be used to avoid taking damage in many places. If you are in normal flight and run into an enemy, you will lose flight, but keep your Cape, and be invulnerable for a short period of time. This can be used both as a safety measure and also as a way to boost through objects without having to avoid them. Using your Cape in this way is generally referred to as "Cape-cancelling." Many levels in the game feature the use of Cape-cancelling to progress through obstacles that you would normally have to wait to avoid.

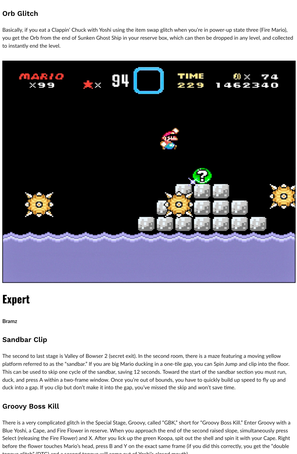
Fast Flight

In *Super Mario World*, you do not actually move at a constant speed when you are holding right. Instead, you oscillate between five speed values. Because you don't need to hold right while you are flying, you can lock in your value at the highest speed by tapping right until you can tell that you have the best value.



Block Duplication

While standing next to a Turn Block or a ? Block, you can jump up and throw an item during a small frame window and duplicate the Block in many different directions. This frame window occurs when the item you are holding is near the bottom of the Block you are trying to dupe. This can be used to get extra power-ups or to obtain glitched Yoshi Wings.



Advanced

Truman

Yoshi Clip

This trick is used to obtain the secret exit in Vanilla Dome 2 and both exits in Forest of Illusion 2. To clip into corners with Yoshi, you have to dismount Yoshi in the water next to the corner and move slightly over toward the corner. If you do this correctly and remount Yoshi at the proper time, he will snap to your position and you will be inside the wall. Once in the wall you need to hold down and then tap A so you dismount and remount Yoshi again. Even if done correctly, there is still a chance you will not clip and will need to try again.

Morton Fly

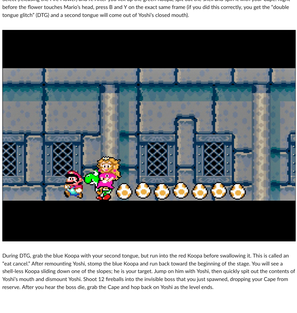
The Morton Fly is a strategy for flying through the vertical room of Castle 2. While tricky for new runners, this strat is essential for almost every category in the game. The key to maintaining flight through all of this room is to swing out wider than you would think for most of your jumps.

Duplicating Yoshi Wings

Doing this trick requires both having a Yoshi and a knowledge of Block duplication, which is explained in the Block Duplication section. In this level, take Yoshi to the middle section of the first room by all the Turn Blocks and where the first Dragon Coin is. Using the nearby Buzzy Beetle, duplicate the Turn Block up so that it is inside the Dragon Coin, then collect the Coin. While it will look like there is nothing there, there is actually an invisible Key Block where the duplicated Block was. Re-stun the beetle so it does not wake up, and then duplicate the invisible Block to the side. Wings appear and you can then collect them with Yoshi to end the level and get the normal exit.

Orb Glitch

Basically, if you eat a Clappin' Chuck with Yoshi using the item swap glitch when you're in power-up state three (Fire Mario), you get the Orb from the end of Sunken Ghost Ship in your reserve box, which can then be dropped in any level, and collected to instantly end the level.



Expert

Bramz

Sandbar Clip

The second to last stage is Valley of Bowser 2 (secret exit). In the second room, there is a maze featuring a moving yellow platform referred to as the "sandbar." If you are big Mario ducking in a one-tile gap, you can Spin Jump and clip into the floor. This can be used to skip one cycle of the sandbar, saving 12 seconds. Toward the start of the sandbar section you must run, duck, and press A within a two-frame window. Once you're out of bounds, you have to quickly build up speed to fly up and duck into a gap. If you clip but don't make it into the gap, you've missed the skip and won't save time.

Groovy Boss Kill

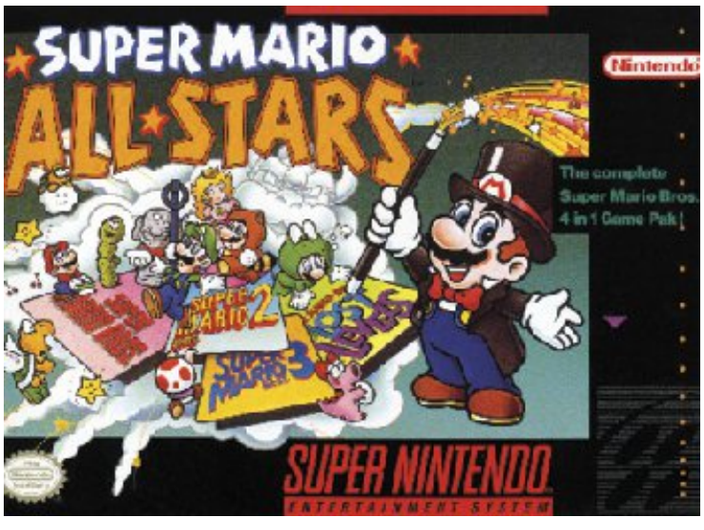
There is a very complicated glitch in the Special Stage, Groovy, called "GBK," short for "Groovy Boss Kill." Enter Groovy with a Blue Yoshi, a Cape, and Fire Flower in reserve. When you approach the end of the second raised slope, simultaneously press Select (releasing the Fire Flower) and X. After you lick up the green Koopa, spit out the shell and spit it with your Cape. Right before the flower touches Mario's head, press B and Y on the exact same frame (if you did this correctly, you get the "double tongue glitch" (DTG) and a second tongue will come out of Yoshi's closed mouth).

During DTG, grab the blue Koopa with your second tongue, but run into the red Koopa before swallowing it. This is called an "eat cancel." After remounting Yoshi, stomp the blue Koopa and run back toward the beginning of the stage. You will see a shell-less Koopa sliding down one of the slopes: he is your target. Jump on him with Yoshi, then quickly spit out the contents of Yoshi's mouth and dismount Yoshi. Shoot 12 fireballs into the invisible boss that you just spawned, dropping your Cape from reserve. After you hear the boss die, grab the Cape and hop back on Yoshi as the level ends.

Super Mario World would go on to be considered one of the greatest platforming games of all time by players and critics alike. As the first 16-bit title by Nintendo, it helped usher in a new generation of vibrant visuals, imaginative gameplay, and memorable sounds, and also introduced a new character that would quickly become a fan-favorite fixture of the *Mario* universe.

Nintendo bundled *Super Mario World* with the Super NES hardware at launch. This fact, combined with both the game and system's monstrous success, led *Super Mario World* to sell over 20M lifetime units. It easily became the best-selling game on the system by an insurmountable margin.

In an alternate reality, *Super Mario World*, Mario, Yoshi, and the entire Mushroom Kingdom were sucked into a black hole, never to be seen again. Meanwhile, in our universe...



Super Mario All-Stars

1993, Super NES

Super Mario All-Stars was a compilation featuring remakes of the first three *Super Mario Bros.* titles. Each game was given a visual overhaul using the same 16-bit art style as *Super Mario World*, along with many tweaks, changes, and redesigned elements. This was the first time the original Famicom version of *Super Mario Bros. 2*, titled *Super Mario Bros.: The Lost Levels* in the West, was released outside of Japan.

Super Mario All-Stars + Super Mario World was released the following year and added an updated version of *Super Mario World* to the compilation as well.

BS Super Mario USA

1996, Satellaview

Super Mario USA, the title given to the Western version of *Super Mario Bros. 2* in Japan, received a Japan-only sequel for the Super Famicom. Released as a four-part episodic adventure via the Super Famicom's Satellaview add-on, *BS Super Mario USA* used a timer to sync up in-game events with a live audio broadcast narrating the game's plot!

Super Mario 64

1996, Nintendo 64

Much like *Super Mario World*, *Super Mario 64* helped launch an entire generation of gaming. And, like its predecessor, *Super Mario 64* went on to be the best-selling game of its respective console. Known for pioneering 3D platforming, *Super Mario 64* successfully broke the 2D mold Mario had lived in for over a decade since his debut as Jumpman in the original *Donkey Kong* arcade game.

Some aspects unique to *Super Mario World*, such as the colored Blocks, return in *Super Mario 64*—as does Yoshi, who is found at the top of Princess Peach's Castle once all 120 stars have been collected. He tells Mario, "It has been so long since our last adventure!"

Yoshi, along with Wario and Luigi, became playable characters in *Super Mario 64 DS* for the Nintendo DS in 2004.

Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2

2001, Game Boy Advance

The *Super Mario Advance 2* port of *Super Mario World* offers a large number of changes and improvements over the original. Once a colored Yoshi has been found in Star World, Mario can discover the adult version in any ? Block. The type of Yoshi is determined by Mario's currently active power-up.

Super Mario Sunshine

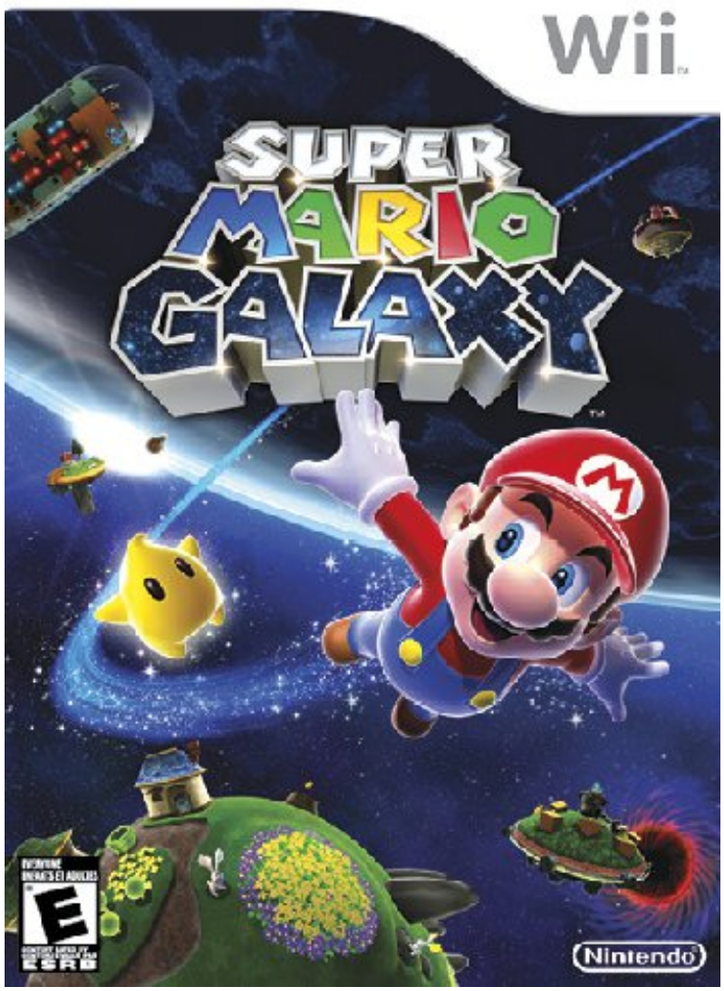
2002, GameCube

Mario's second major 3D outing equipped him with a water-powered backpack known as F.L.U.D.D. His set of moves was augmented by this device as he assisted the denizens of Isle Delfino, allowing him to hover, swim faster, and...clean stuff? It seems a plumber's work is never done!

New Super Mario Bros. Series

2006-2013

Keeping the 3D graphics but returning to the iconic 2D gameplay after more than a decade, *New Super Mario Bros.* (Nintendo DS, 2006) ignited a resurgence in classic-style *Mario* platformers. Starting with *New Super Mario Bros. Wii* (2009), the series would put an emphasis on cooperative multiplayer and continue through *New Super Mario Bros. 2* for the Nintendo 3DS (2012), and *New Super Mario Bros. U* for the Nintendo Wii U (2012). Luigi even got his first self-titled platformer in the main series: *New Super Luigi U* (Nintendo Wii U, 2013).



Super Mario Galaxy

2007, Wii

One of Mario's most ambitious games yet, *Super Mario Galaxy* catapulted the plumber onto the surface of dozens of miniature planets. Each planet offers its own microsystem of puzzles, obstacles, or enemies to overcome, before Mario rockets off to the next one. Rosalina, a recurring character in various *Mario* titles, makes her first appearance in *Super Mario Galaxy*.

The developers had so many ideas that a sequel, *Super Mario Galaxy 2*, was released in 2010, and featured new power-ups, such as Cloud Mario, as well as Yoshi in spaaaaaace!

Super Mario 3D Land

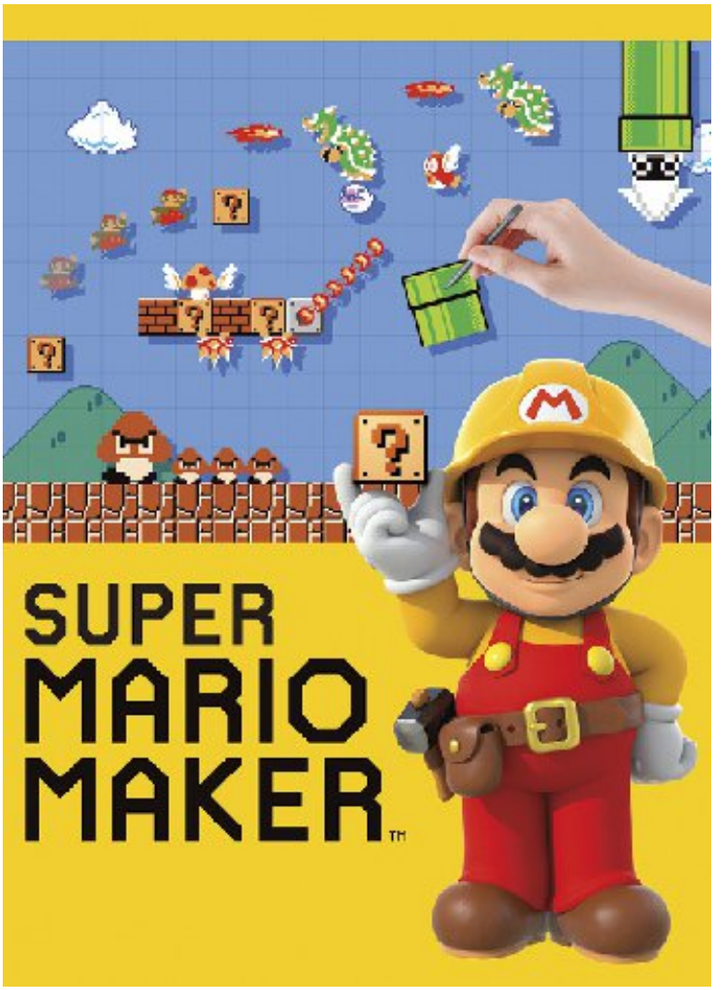
2011, Nintendo 3DS

After 21 years in exile, the fan-favorite Tanooki Suit returns! *Super Mario 3D Land*'s level design and visuals were inspired by classic 2D *Mario* titles, but with a 3D reinterpretation.

Super Mario 3D World

2013, Wii U

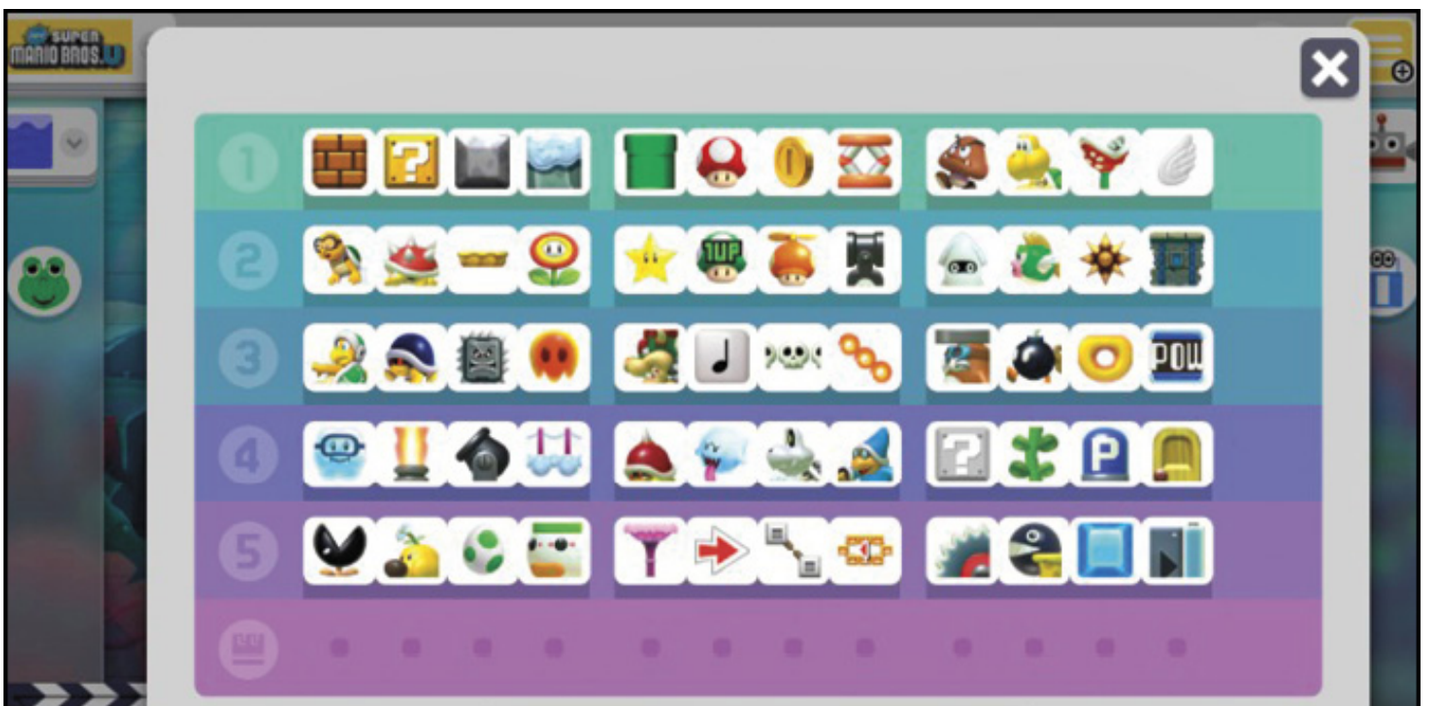
A sequel, *Super Mario 3D World*, added four-way cooperative multiplayer and the infamous Cat Suits. In a rare change, Princess Peach joins the adventure as a playable character, alongside Mario, Luigi, Toad, and Rosalina.

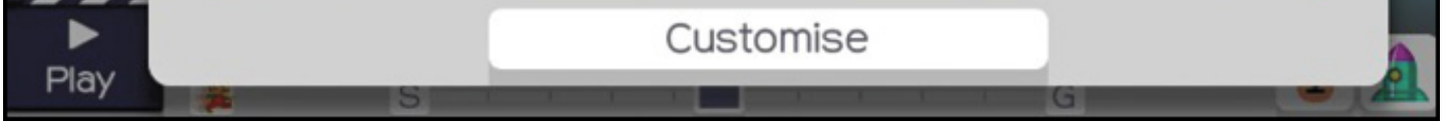


Super Mario Maker

2015, Wii U

For anyone ever wanting to create their own custom *Super Mario* levels, *Super Mario Maker* provides a robust toolset for doing exactly that. Levels can be created from one of four styles (*Super Mario Bros.*, *Super Mario Bros. 3*, *Super Mario World*, and *New Super Mario Bros. U*), each providing its own unique visual assets, obstacles, power-ups, enemies, and gameplay mechanics.





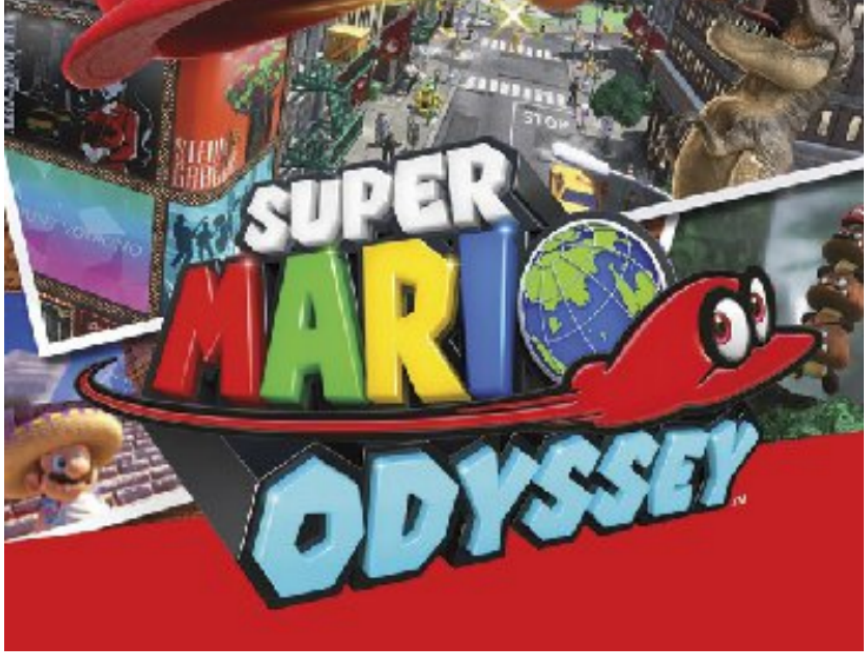
Upon its release, *Super Mario Maker* became a viral sensation as players from around the world created seemingly impossible stages that made for jaw-dropping videos online.

A handheld port was released for the Nintendo 3DS in 2016.

Super Mario Run

2016, iOS / Android

The first-ever *Mario* game released for mobile phones, *Super Mario Run* features classic *Mario* gameplay with a twist. Mario automatically moves through levels and players must help him avoid obstacles, defeat enemies, and collect items by tapping the touchscreen to jump. Other playable characters such as Princess Peach and Yoshi can be unlocked. The game was touted as the first *Mario* title that could be played with one hand.



Super Mario Odyssey

2017, Nintendo Switch

Following in the legacy of *Super Mario 64* and *Super Mario Sunshine*, *Super Mario Odyssey* is the plumber's wildest adventure, by far. Mario running around in a quasi-real city with realistic humans and taxi cabs? Check. Mario possessing enemies with his hat? Check. Mario possessing a T-rex? Oh yeah.

It gets even more awesome! Pauline, the damsel in distress from the original *Donkey Kong*, makes her *Super Mario* debut after 36 years as songstress and mayor of New Donk City.

Super Mario World

Super Mario World Credits

Main Director

Takashi Tezuka

Map Director

Hideki Konno

Area Director

Katsuya Eguchi

Program Director

Toshihiko Nakago

Mario and System Programmer

Toshio Iwawaki

Object Programmer

Kazuaki Morita

Background Programmers

Shigehiro Kasamatsu

Tatsunori Takakura

Map Programmer

Tatsuo Nishiyama

Area Data Input

Yoshihiro Nomoto

Eiji Noto

Satoru Takahata

Character Graphic Designer

Shigefumi Hino

Sound Composer

Koji Kondo

Special Thanks to

Yoichi Kotabe

Yasuhiro Sakai

Mie Yoshimura

Hironobu Kakui

Keizo Kato

Takao Shimizu

Dayv Brooks (International version only)

Producer

Shigeru Miyamoto

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

Overview

DEVELOPER

Nintendo EAD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: November 21, 1991

NA: A pril 13, 1992

EU: September 24, 1992

> **“In a realm beyond sight, The Sky shines gold, not blue. There, the Triforce’s might Makes mortal dreams come true.”**

Long ago, in the beautiful kingdom of Hyrule surrounded by mountains and forests…legends told of an omnipotent and omniscient Golden Power that resided in a hidden land.

Many people aggressively sought to enter the hidden Golden Land… But no one ever returned. One day, evil power began to flow from the Golden Land…

So the King commanded seven wise men to seal the gate to the Land of the Golden Power. That seal should have remained for all time…

…But, when these events were obscured by the mists of time and became legend…

A mysterious wizard known as Agahnim came to Hyrule to release the seal. He eliminated the good King of Hyrule.

Through evil magic, he began to make descendants of the seven wise men vanish, one after another.

And the time of destiny for Princess Zelda is drawing near.

One night, a girl’s voice awakens you from your sleep.

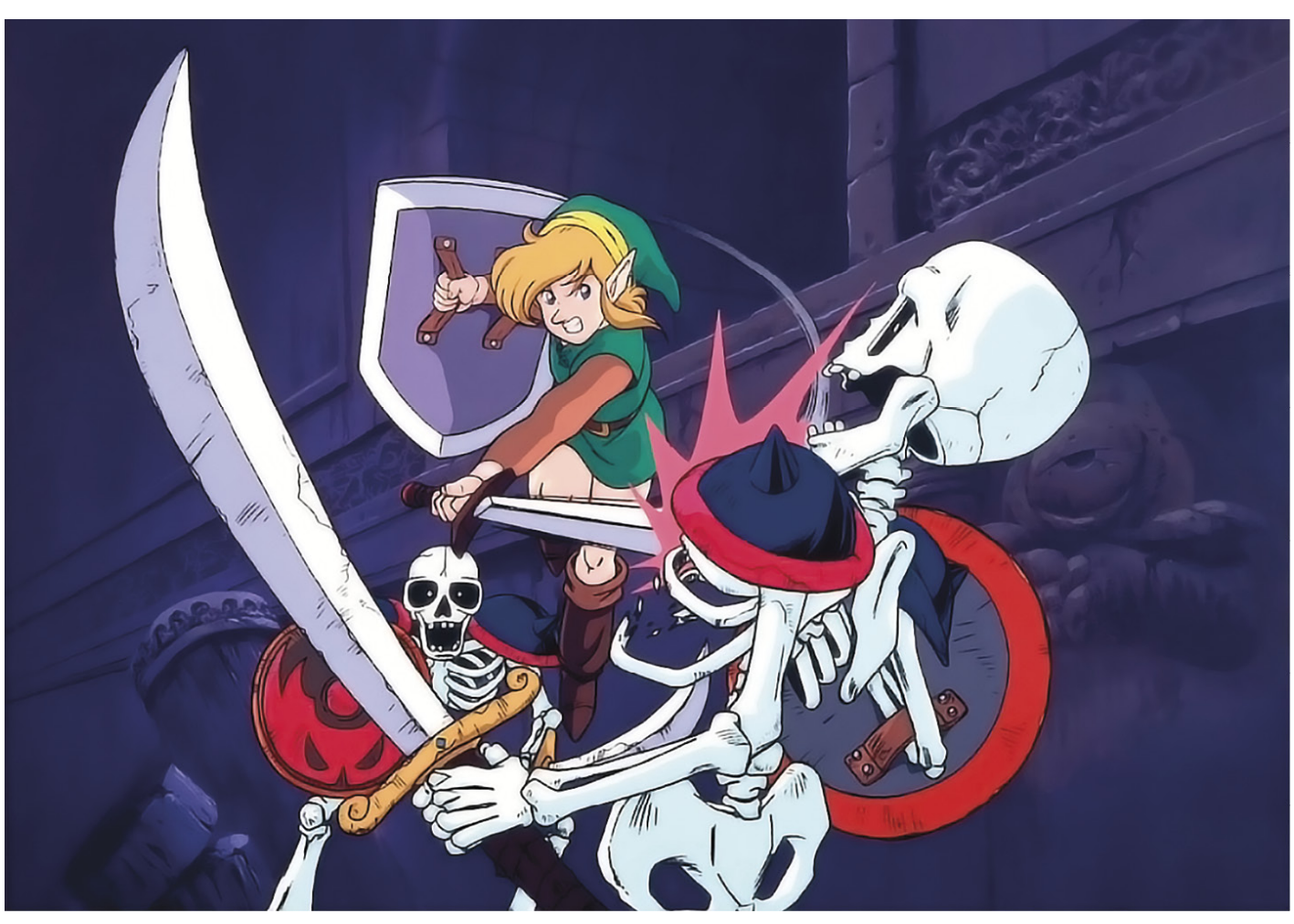
She telepathically pleads.

You jump out of bed not knowing whether the voice was part of a dream or reality. Upon leaving your bed, you find your uncle, who should be fast asleep at this time, preparing to go out, girded for battle.

“I’ll be back by morning,” he says as he departs. “Don’t leave the house.”

You watch him leave with the family sword in hand and shield on arm. This night is like no other… Who is Zelda? Where had your uncle gone and for what reason?

And so, on an ill-fated night, a new chapter in the legend of Hyrule’s hero begins—a new chapter in *The Legend of Zelda*!



Link's Peter Pan-inspired green attire, flute-playing, adversarial shadow, and friendly female fairies are hard to miss. Somewhat less known is that the name "Link" originated from a concept where the main character would travel between the past and distant future. Unlike *Ocarina of Time*'s future Hyrule, this future would have featured advanced technology, and the Triforce would have been made from electronic chips. The two eras would be connected by the hero, who would act as a "link" between them. The sci-fi idea was scrapped in favor of a "heroic fantasy," but the hero's name stuck, as did the concept of dual worlds which would become a recurring theme throughout the series.

By the Lake

The original NES game was unusual in many ways. Initially designed as a launch title for the Famicom Disk System, the first pass of the game used the Japan-only peripheral's ability to write and rewrite game data in order to allow players to create custom dungeons that could be shared with each other. The feedback emphasized playing dungeons over creating them, so Nintendo scrapped the Mario Maker-esque aspect altogether. With just dungeons, the developers felt the game was missing something. The Hyrulean overworld was born from a desire to create a genuine sense of exploration and wonder, largely inspired by co-creator Shigeru Miyamoto's childhood hikes through the Japanese countryside. He recalls first stumbling unexpectedly upon a beautiful lake, and as he continued to explore, he discovered amazing new things along the way. Years later, Mr. Miyamoto used the fond memory of these real-life adventures as the foundation for something even more fantastic. As the Disk System was never made available for the NES, *The Legend of Zelda* was released as a traditional cartridge, becoming the first home console game to feature an internal battery for saving game progress (prior games used complex passwords, if anything).

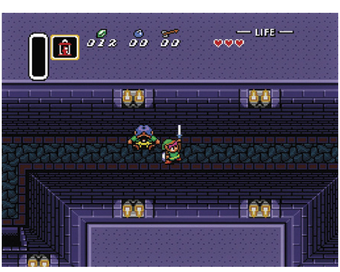
While the instruction booklet (and its sealed minibook of secrets) provided tips on playing, the game itself dropped the player into the wondrous land of Hyrule and let them figure everything out on their own. It was designed to be the antithesis of the linear *Super Mario Bros.*, which was in development simultaneously by the same team. The vast majority of the game can be accessed right from the beginning, with only increased danger acting as a barrier to entry. Dungeons can be completed in any order, and new items are added to the hero's inventory with no explanation of their purpose. An intended side effect of this cryptic design was that players would get together and share their asymmetrical experiences. Few games throughout the history of gaming would be so brazen as to intentionally eschew the basic learning tools players have come to expect, including most *Zelda* titles. A handful of notable exceptions, such as the *Dark Souls* series, *Super Metroid*, and early versions of *Minecraft*, managed to capture some of the magic of the original *The Legend of Zelda* by following its enigmatic approach.

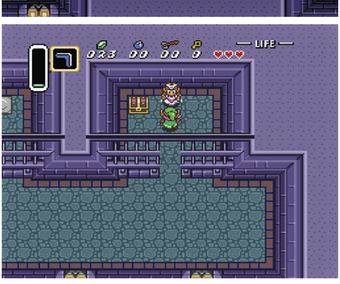
The breakout success of the original game provided an early model for the action-adventure genre, but its 16-bit successor set that model in stone.

Triforce of the Gods

Following the release of *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link*, which memorably stands apart from all other titles in the series as a challenging side-scrolling platformer with RPG-centric experience points and player growth, Nintendo began development on a third *Zelda* game for the NES. Mr. Miyamoto produced while Takashi Tezuka continued in his role as director. Mr. Miyamoto had claimed since the first game that the third *Zelda* would expand the playable roster to feature a trio, akin to more traditional party- and class-based RPGs. The group would include an elven swordsman, a magic user, and a fairy used for reconnaissance, who ended up appearing as a transformation spell in *The Adventure of Link* instead. *Zelda 3*, as it was initially called, never featured this system, though multiplayer did become a recurring feature later in the series—usually only consisting of multiple versions of Link, however. The game was moved to Nintendo's upcoming 16-bit console shortly after development began. This change provided more time and a considerably larger budget. What started as a modest 8-bit project would eventually become the largest Super NES game upon its release.

Whereas *The Legend of Zelda* was intentionally opaque, *A Link to the Past* delved deep into the struggle between light and dark, establishing many persistent elements of the *Zelda* mythos. The game begins with a rich and surprisingly dark prologue involving the ritual sacrifice of young maidens. A young boy is summoned to Hyrule Castle via a telepathic plea from a prisoner held within its dungeon. Once there, Link learns of his lineage as the last Knight of Hyrule from his mortally wounded uncle, taking up his fallen relative's sword and shield. Link then rescues Princess Zelda in a thrilling prison break, escaping through the castle's shadowy underbelly, all within the first 15 minutes.





After Link escorts the princess to the Sanctuary through a secret passage and learning of the legendary weapon needed to stop the game's antagonist, the vast expanse of Hyrule opens to the player and the adventure truly begins.

Magic Mirror

Even decades later, *A Link to the Past* remains a showcase for exceptional 16-bit pixel art. Hyrule is filled with details that other games either couldn't handle, or didn't take the time to, such as clouds casting shadows on the ground and fish flopping about after Link drains a lake. The game opens with a stunning rainstorm effect that would not have been possible on the NES.

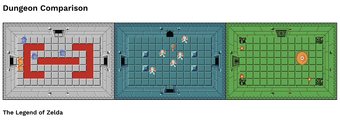
Before *A Link to the Past*, our imaginations filled in these details because they had to. Afterward, games that didn't include them felt lifeless by comparison.

Dungeon Design

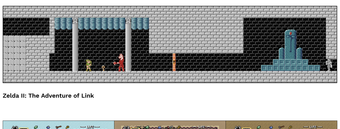
A Link to the Past features a total of 12 dungeons—more than any other *Zelda* game to date and tied only with its eventual successor, *A Link Between Worlds*.

In both *The Legend of Zelda* and *Zelda II*, dungeons and palaces, respectively, aren't particularly distinctive beyond their color palettes. Thanks to the advanced graphical capabilities of the Super NES, *A Link to the Past* introduced thematically driven dungeons built around distinctive motifs such as fire and ice. This practice would become especially prevalent in the 3D *Zelda* titles, where the elements feature heavily into the dungeons' design, appearance, and naming schemes. Water Temple, anyone?

Dungeon Comparison



The Legend of Zelda



Zelda II: The Adventure of Link

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

Music

Composer Koji Kondo largely established the musical identity of the series through *A Link to the Past*, introducing recurring themes for Princess Zelda, Ganon, Hyrule Castle, and the fairies. The overworld theme, Hyrule Overture, which Mr. Kondo composed in a single day for the original NES game, returns in a greatly enhanced form thanks to the 16-bit console's superior stereo sound.

Coincidentally, both *The Legend of Zelda*'s classic dungeon theme and *Ninja Gaiden*'s somber prologue music drew inspiration from the same 12-minute song by English rock band, Deep Purple.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

The Hero of Hyrule

A core theme in *The Legend of Zelda* series is that Link is just an everyday boy who gets drawn into incredible events and grows to become a hero. For his 16-bit debut, Link was provided with an upgraded moveset and greatly expanded assortment of items and equipment.

Whirling Blade

A Link to the Past first introduced the Whirling Blade—a secret sword technique known only to the Knights of Hyrule and taught to Link by his uncle. After charging for a moment, Link can unleash a powerful 360-degree attack with his sword that hits all enemies in range.

This move became a staple of the series and has since been known by many names: Spinning Slash, Charged Attack, and most simply, the Spin Attack.

Dash Attack

A bigger Hyrule calls for a faster way to get around. Early on, Link gains the Pegasus Shoes, which allow him to dash in a straight line with his sword in front of him. The developers took special care to ensure this move felt immensely satisfying regardless of whether it was being used to cut through grass, knock enemies out of the way, or break open cracked walls.

The Dash Attack and Pegasus Shoes/Boots most commonly appear in 2D *Zelda* titles, as 3D games feature a non-combat roll or other means of expedited movement (such as a horse or transformation) in their place.

Lifting and Throwing

Inspired by a similar mechanic from *Super Mario Bros. 2*, Link was given the ability to pick up items and throw them. Most commonly this includes pots, but may also include Cuccos or even large boulders with the proper equipment, such as the Power Glove.

Equipment and Items

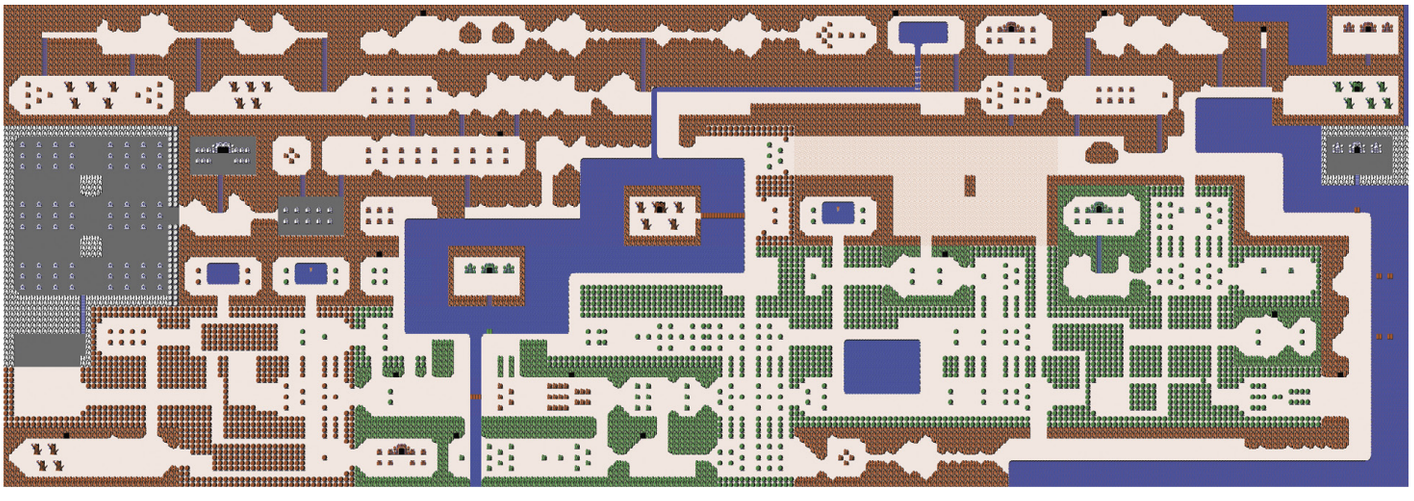
Link's elaborate arsenal includes the usual assortment of swords, sorcery, musical instruments, and fairy-enslaving bottles. As with the original, many of the items in *A Link to the Past* are non-essential and can be missed or avoided. Two notable additions include Zora's Slippers, which introduced swimming to the series, while the Hookshot would become a staple of Link's past and future adventures as well.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

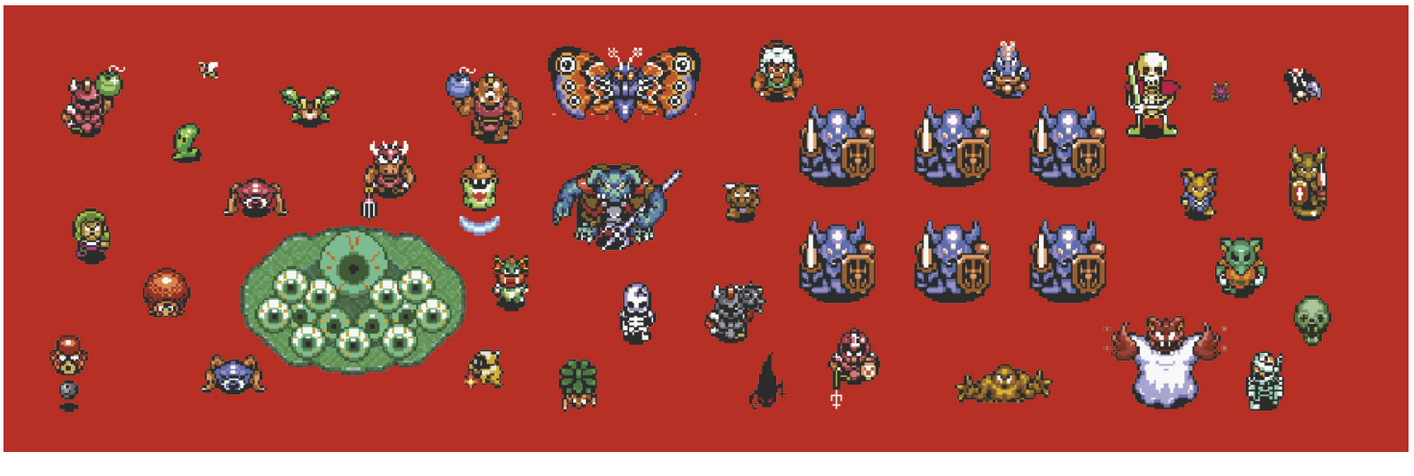
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

Hyrule

The Legend of Zelda's world map measured 16 screens wide by eight screens high, while the entirety of its dungeons could be combined to fit into a single rectangular shape. Because the developers had accidentally used only half of the intended dungeon designs, a Second Quest was added where starting a new game after beating it would rearrange the location of items and increase the difficulty of enemies and dungeons. Conversely, *A Link to the Past*'s alternate worlds were no accident. By creating two nearly identical overworlds, the game could be much longer without doubling the amount of memory used. The game's code treats the Dark World as a graphical overlay for the Light World, with only the differences between them being saved to memory. Additionally, a custom compression system was utilized to reduce the memory usage of the game's rich color palette.



A Link to the Past's vastly larger and more diverse portrayal of Hyrule altered the original game's near total non-linearity. Exploration does not always provide immediate gratification; items and passages are often hidden in plain sight, but Link initially lacks the items required to reach them. Despite the series' iconic top-down perspective, Nintendo was able to add verticality, giving the on-screen environments multiple height levels. Link can occasionally jump (or fall) off a ledge, but can never climb upward without a ladder. These are just a few of the ways *A Link to the Past* offered a consistently layered gameplay experience.

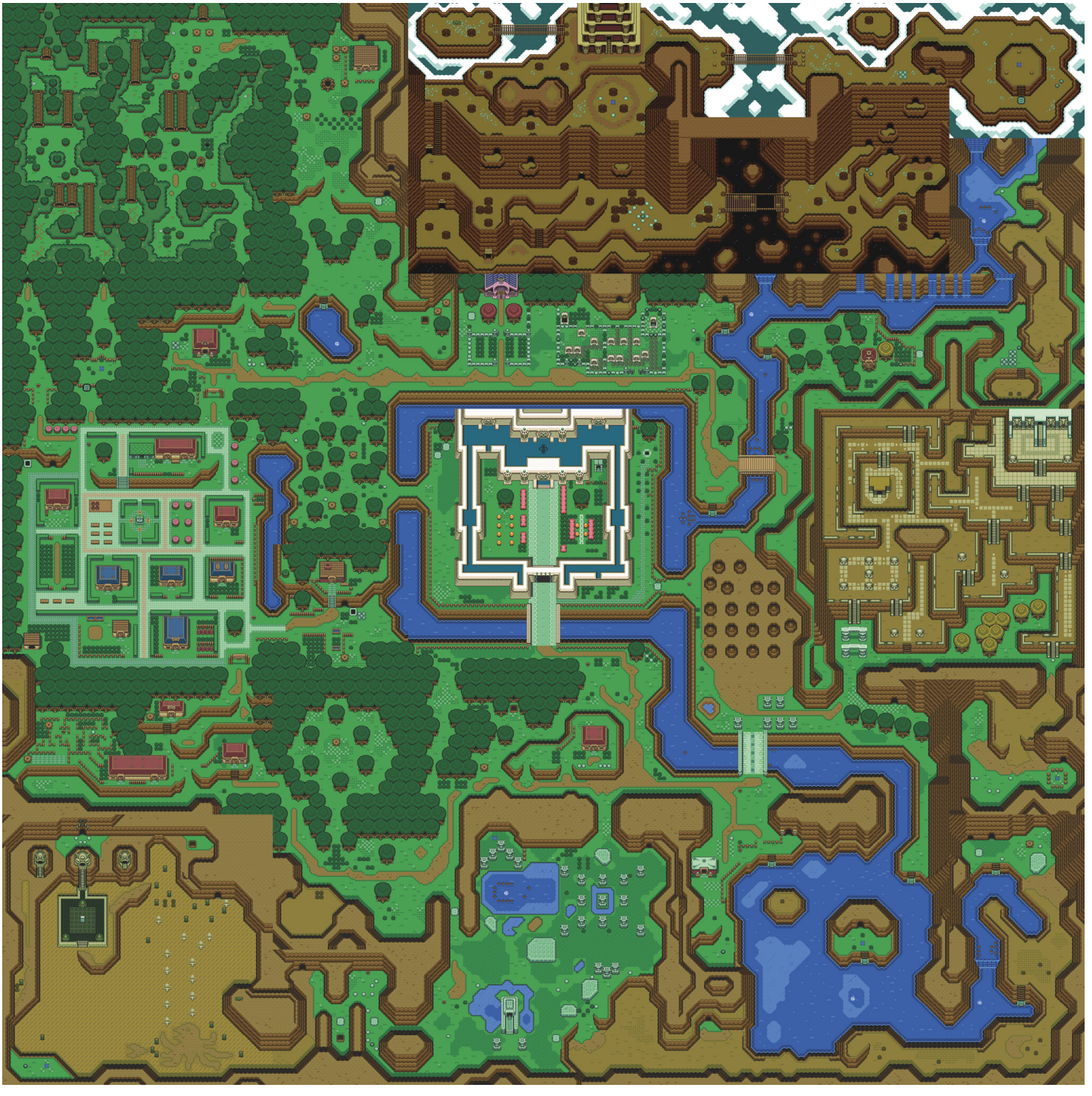


Enemies

As Link's weaponry was expanded, so too were the dangers he faced. Alongside returning adversaries such as Wizzrobes and Wallmasters, a multitude of new enemies were introduced in *A Link to the Past*, with the Light World and Dark World being inhabited by their own unique threats.

Light World

As depicted in the game's story, the world was created by three Golden Goddesses. Known primarily as the land and kingdom of Hyrule, it was alternately referred to as the Light World in *A Link to the Past* to contrast with the Dark World. Because all *Zelda* games are intertwined in some way, the Light World also includes the lands of Labrynna and Holodrum from the *Oracle of Ages/Seasons* games, as well as the Sky, the land above the clouds where the events of *The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword* took place.



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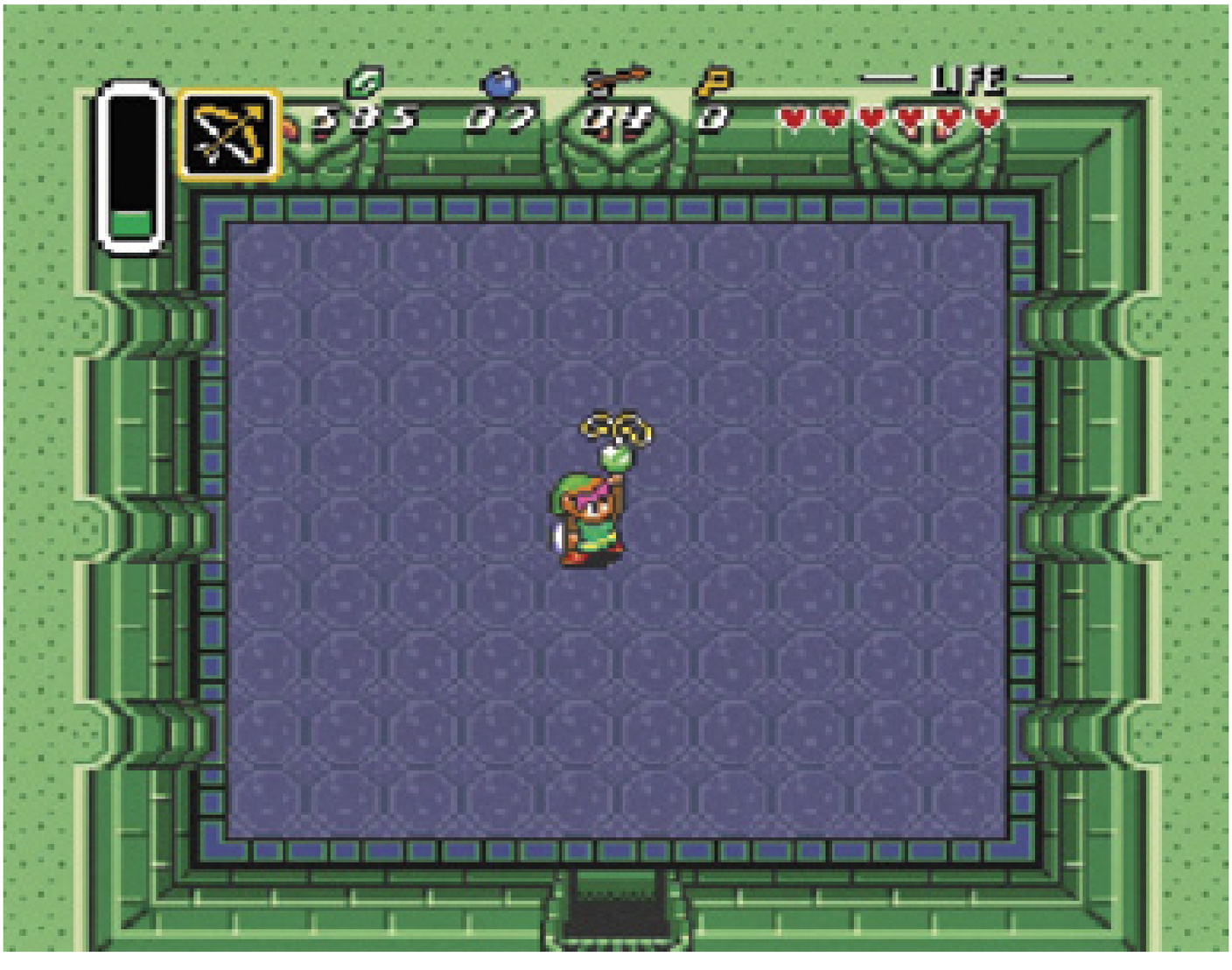
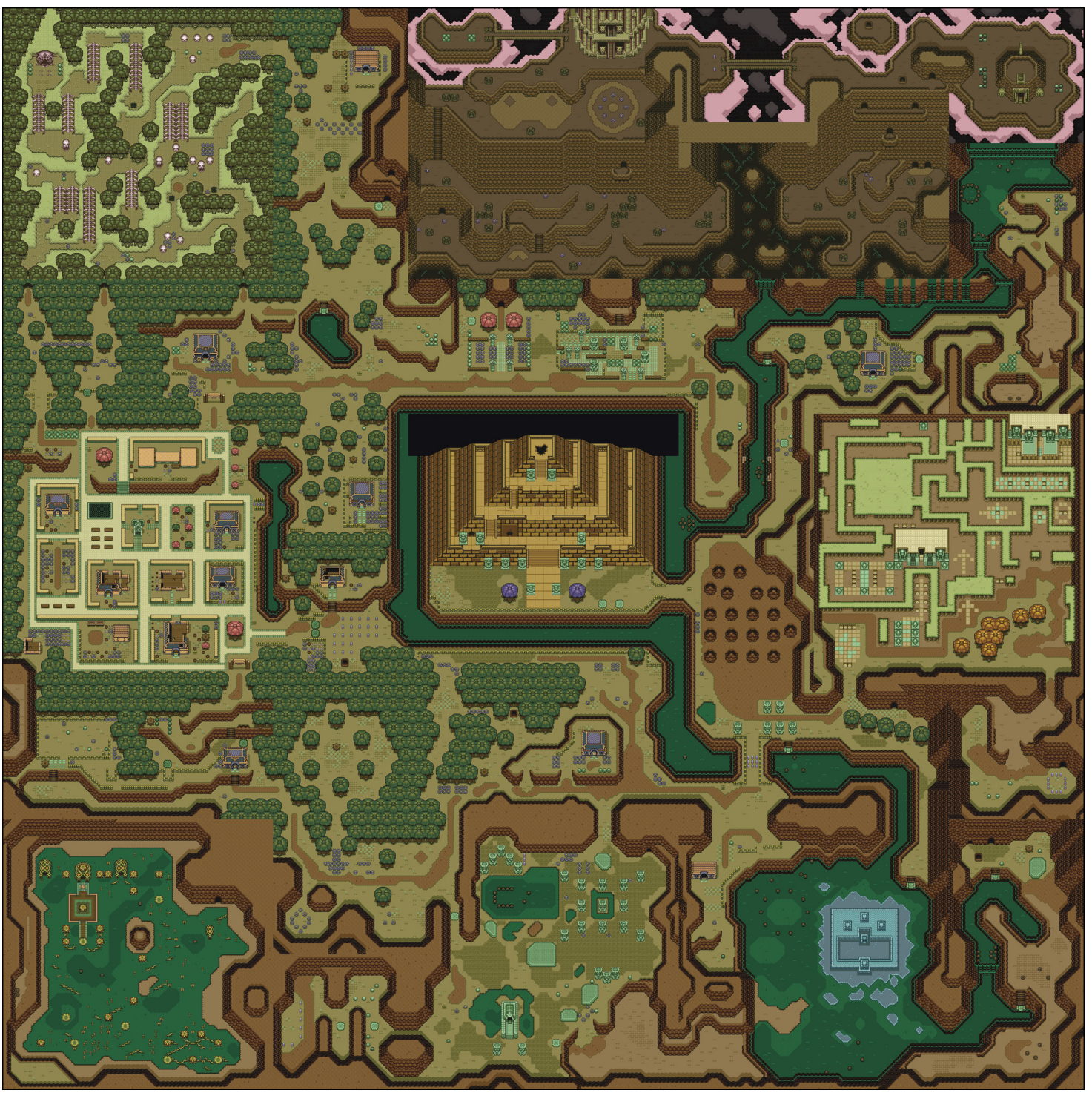
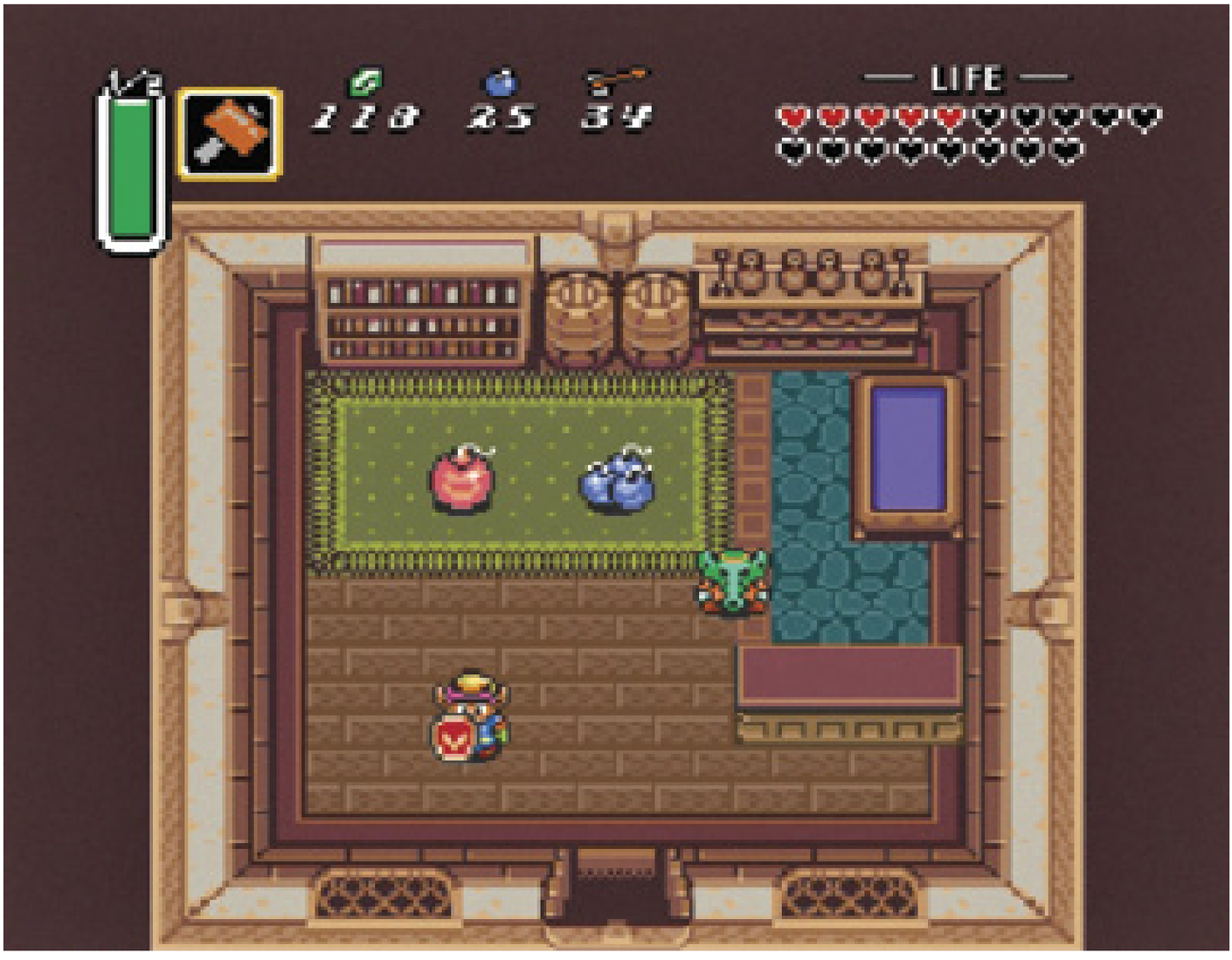

LIFE

Dark World

During the creation of Hyrule, the Golden Goddesses also created the Golden Land, a mythical parallel world and home to the Triforce. The Golden Land, later known as the Sacred Realm, was breached by the thief Ganondorf and corrupted upon his use of the Triforce. The alternate world was twisted to match Ganondorf's evil, and became known as the Dark World. At the end of the game, Link uses the Triforce to wish away Ganon's corruption, and the Dark World is reverted to its former glory as the magical Golden Land.

Other alternate realms exist within the *Zelda* universe, including the Twilight Realm. As seen in *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*, the Twilight Realm was created to imprison those who used dark magic to attempt to steal the Triforce from the Golden Land. Eventually, the banished lost their ambitions of domination and became the Twili, a civilization within the Twilight Realm with their own technology and their own ruling princess, Midna.

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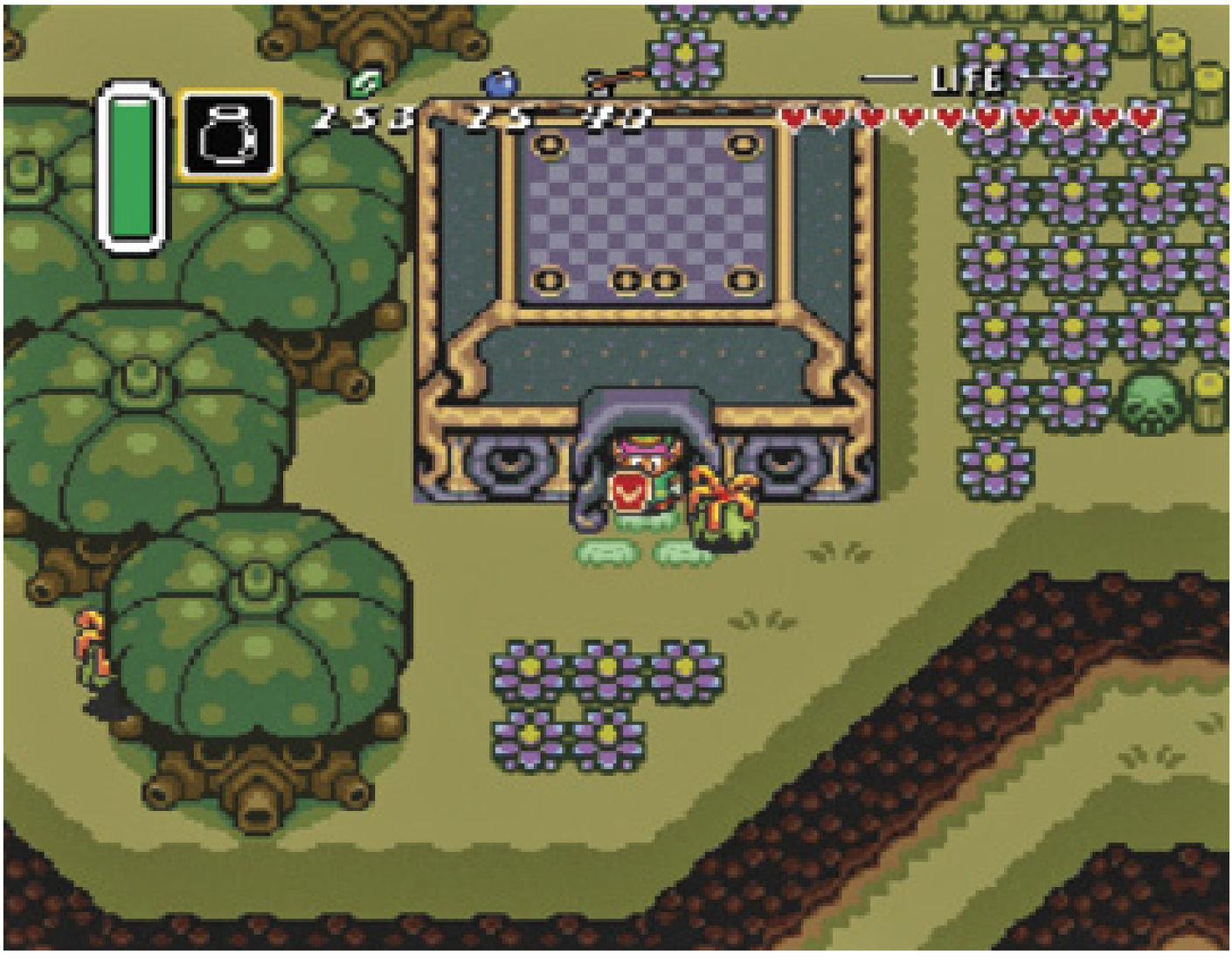
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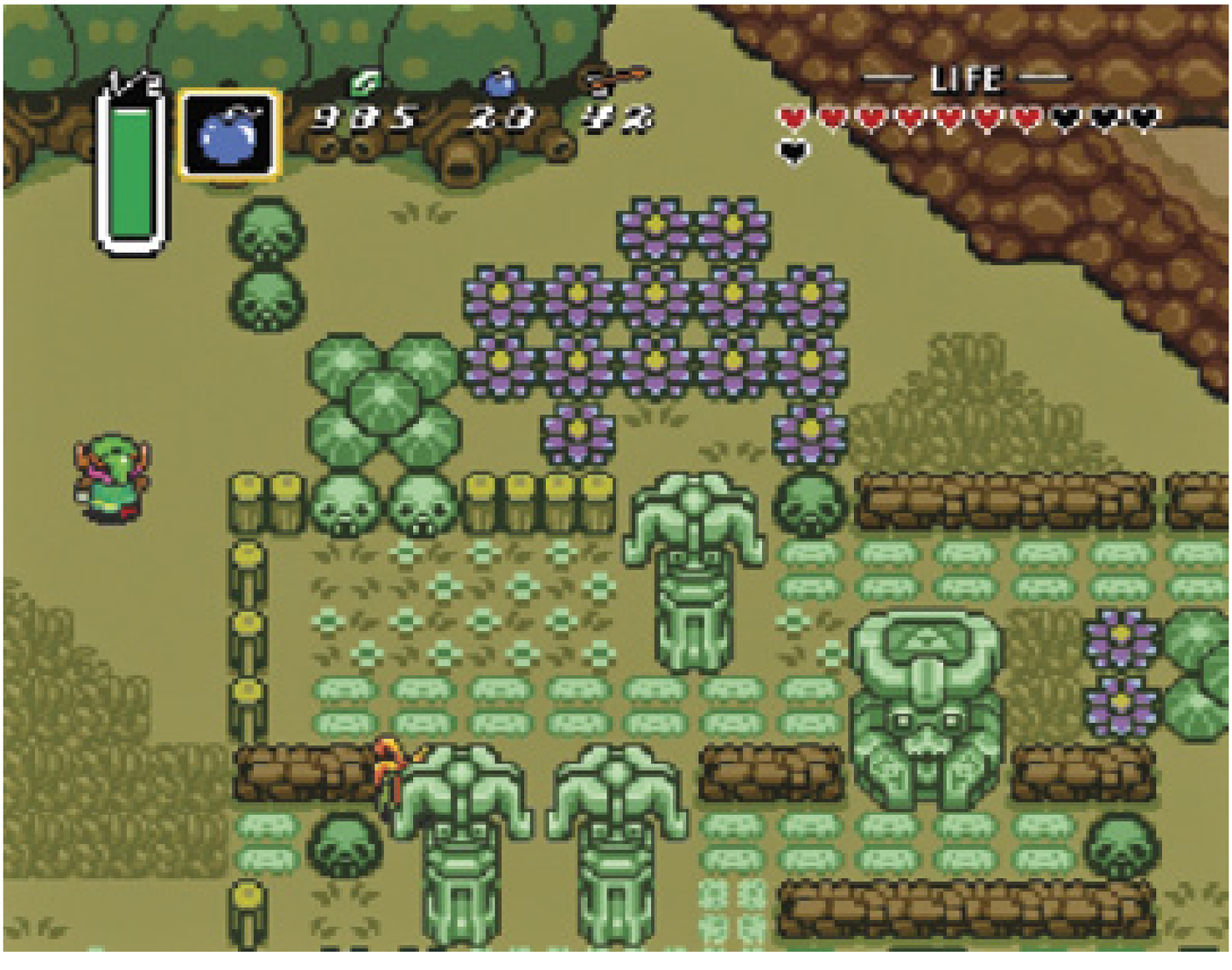

— LIFE —

"Get ready for the triumphant return to Nintendo's fantasy land of legend, Hyrule, in a new adventure that explores the very genesis of the Triforce legend," promised *Nintendo Power*. The fan-favorite magazine went on to showcase the new heroic techniques available to Link, the new world, the engrossing story, and more!

Fans couldn't get enough of the world of Hyrule, and *Nintendo Power* delivered, featuring a retelling of the story in comic form.

The Legend of Link

While the protagonist of *The Legend of Zelda* and *Zelda II* was the same character, *A Link to the Past*'s titular hero was a completely different person. This set up the recurring plot point that would eventually establish many different heroes across countless generations and three distinct timelines. Although players can often name the protagonist anything they want, his canonical name is always Link, and he is often prophesized as the hero who will defeat Ganon. The first three games exist in a timeline known as "The Decline of Hyrule," where Link was defeated by Ganon during the events of *Ocarina of Time*.

The Link from *A Link to the Past* also stars in *Oracle of Seasons*, *Oracle of Ages*, and *Link's Awakening*. *A Link Between Worlds* takes place six generations later and features a descendent of Link named—you guessed it—Tom! Just kidding. His name was also Link.

The Master Sword

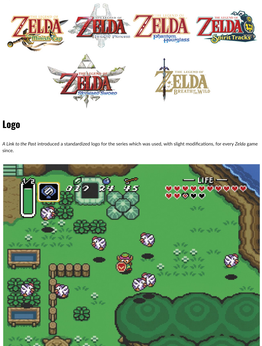
The Master Sword was introduced in *A Link to the Past*, the best sword in the original NES game was called the Magical Sword, and *Zelda II* does not feature different swords, just sword power levels. The story of the Master Sword being sealed away until a worthy hero comes along was inspired by the Arthurian legend of Excalibur, and appeared in every Zelda game in some form after *A Link to the Past*.

Home Invasion

Link's penchant for entering the homes of random NPCs and ransacking their pots has become a staple of the series, but it all started in *A Link to the Past*.

Ganondorf

Both Ganon's full name, Ganondorf, and his human form are mentioned for the first time during the events of *A Link to the Past*. The Western version's instruction manual reveals that Ganondorf's last name is Dragmire, though this is never again mentioned elsewhere in the series.



Sages

A Link to the Past's robust backstory introduces the concept of the Seven Sages. Link must often rescue Sages (or their descendents, known as Maidens in *A Link to the Past*), with each one often being liberated at the end of a specific dungeon. By uniting the Sages or helping their ancestors' lovelies," they assist Link in defeating Ganon, though the method changes from game to game.

Pieces of Heart

A Link to the Past was the first *Zelda* game to feature Pieces of Heart. Collecting four creates a complete Heart Container, increasing Link's maximum health. Pieces of Heart became a common reward for sidequests, exploration, and minigames throughout the series.

Logo

A Link to the Past introduced a standardized logo for the series which was used, with slight modifications, for every Zelda game since.

Cuccos

The terrifying Cuccos made their debut in *A Link to the Past*. Attacking a Cucco summons the infamous Cucco Revenge Squad. Attacking the skeletal Cucco counterparts of the Dark World has the same effect.

Reflecting Boss Attacks

One of the coolest moments of *Ocarina of Time* is volleying one of Ganondorf's magic balls back and forth with Link's sword until the villain's defense falters. This gameplay mechanic appears in several other Zelda titles, but made its first appearance in the battle against Ganon's alter ego, Agahnim, in *A Link to the Past*.

Strangely, Link can also use the Bug-Catching Net to reflect Agahnim's magical attacks. Other unlikely items can be used in final battles throughout the series, including the Bottle and Fishing Rod.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

16 Bits

1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

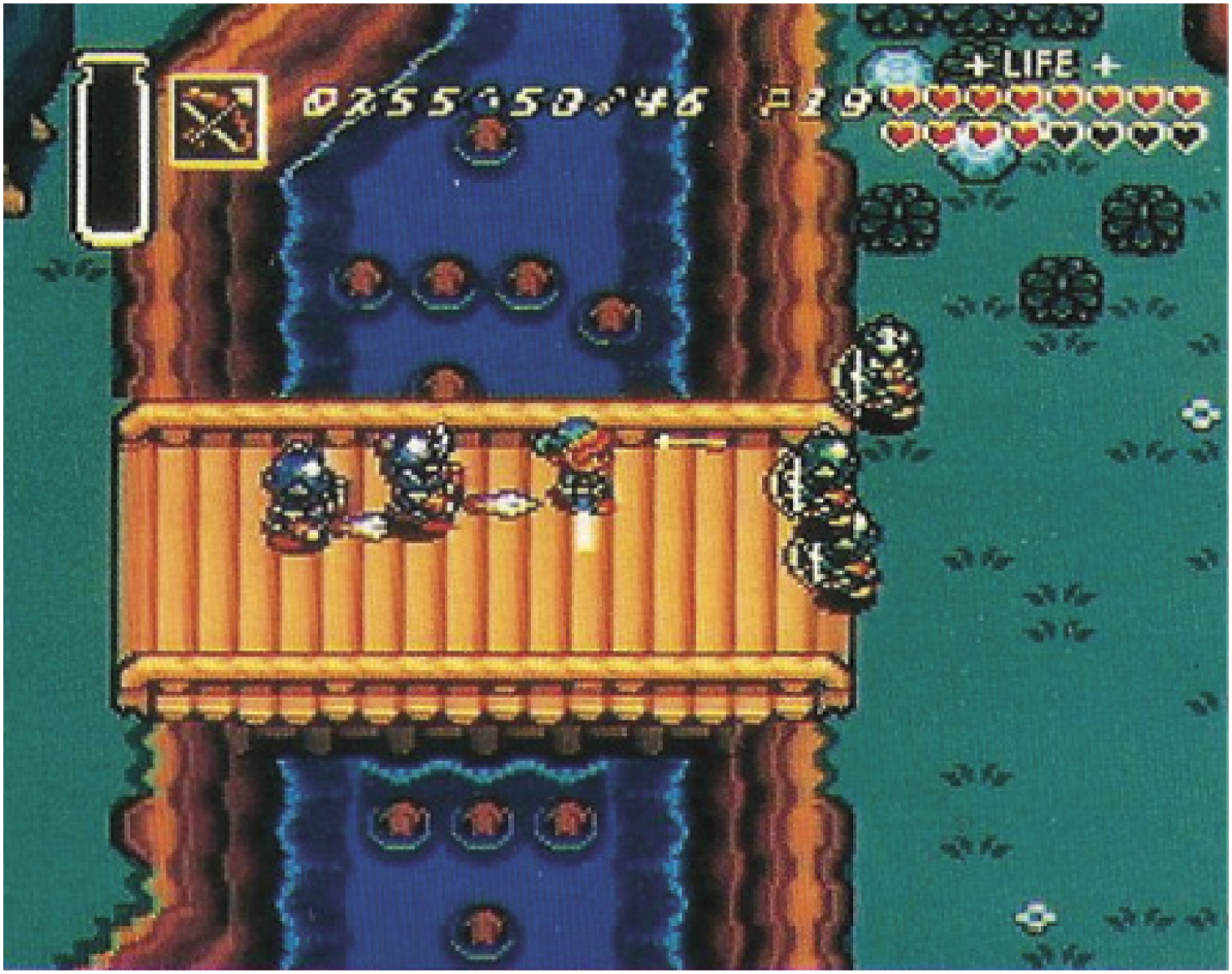
The Super Famicom and Super NES box art for *A Link to the Past* could not be more different. The Japanese version spotlights Link and the Master Sword, while the US version shows nothing other than the giant logo and a golden background reminiscent of the original NES title's cartridge.

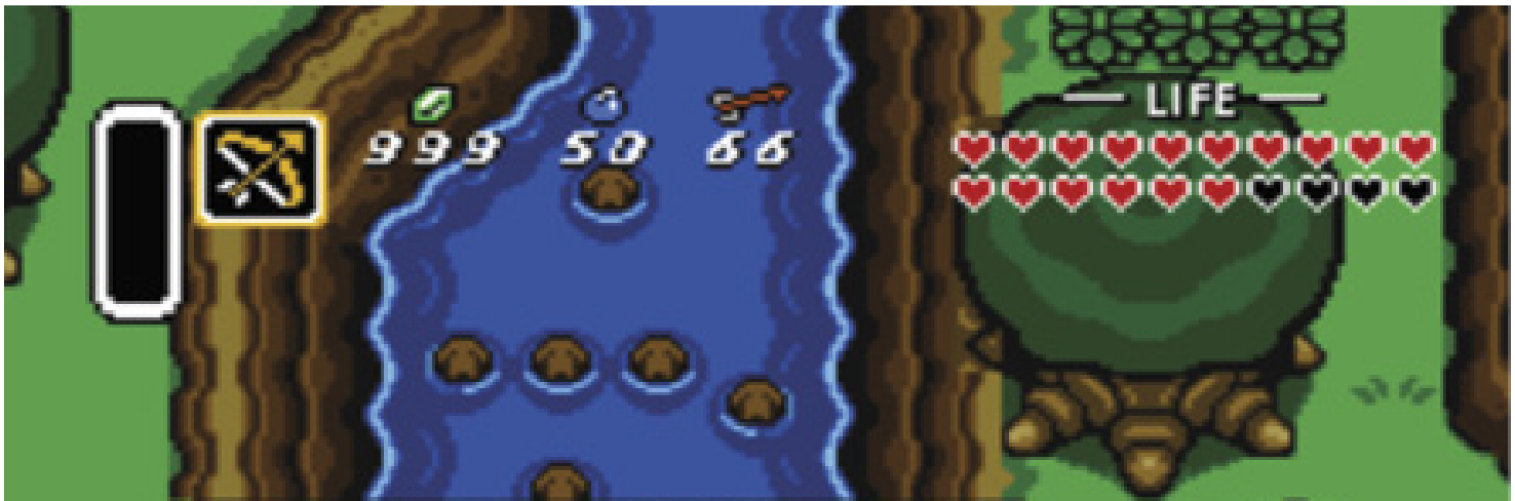
2 WATER AND FIRE

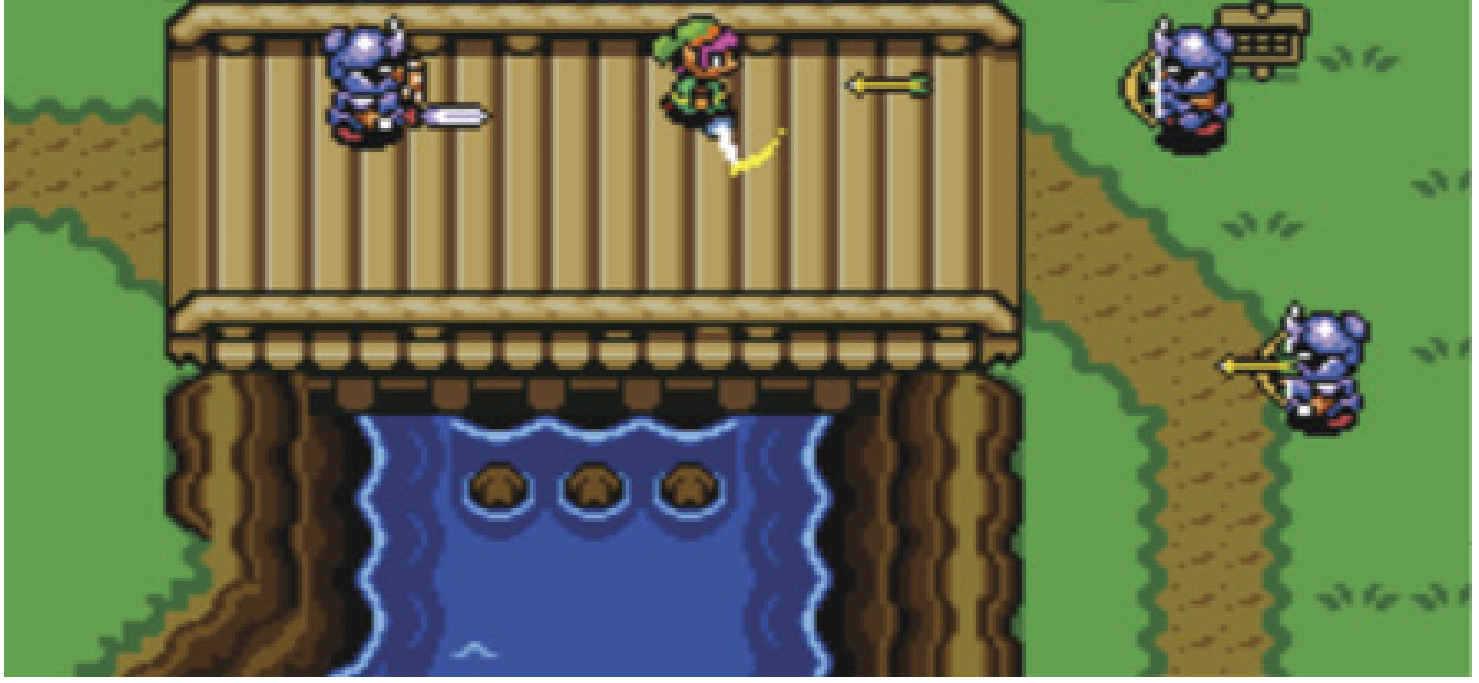
A Link to the Past had plenty of ambitions, yet there were a number of intriguing concepts that didn't make the final game. One

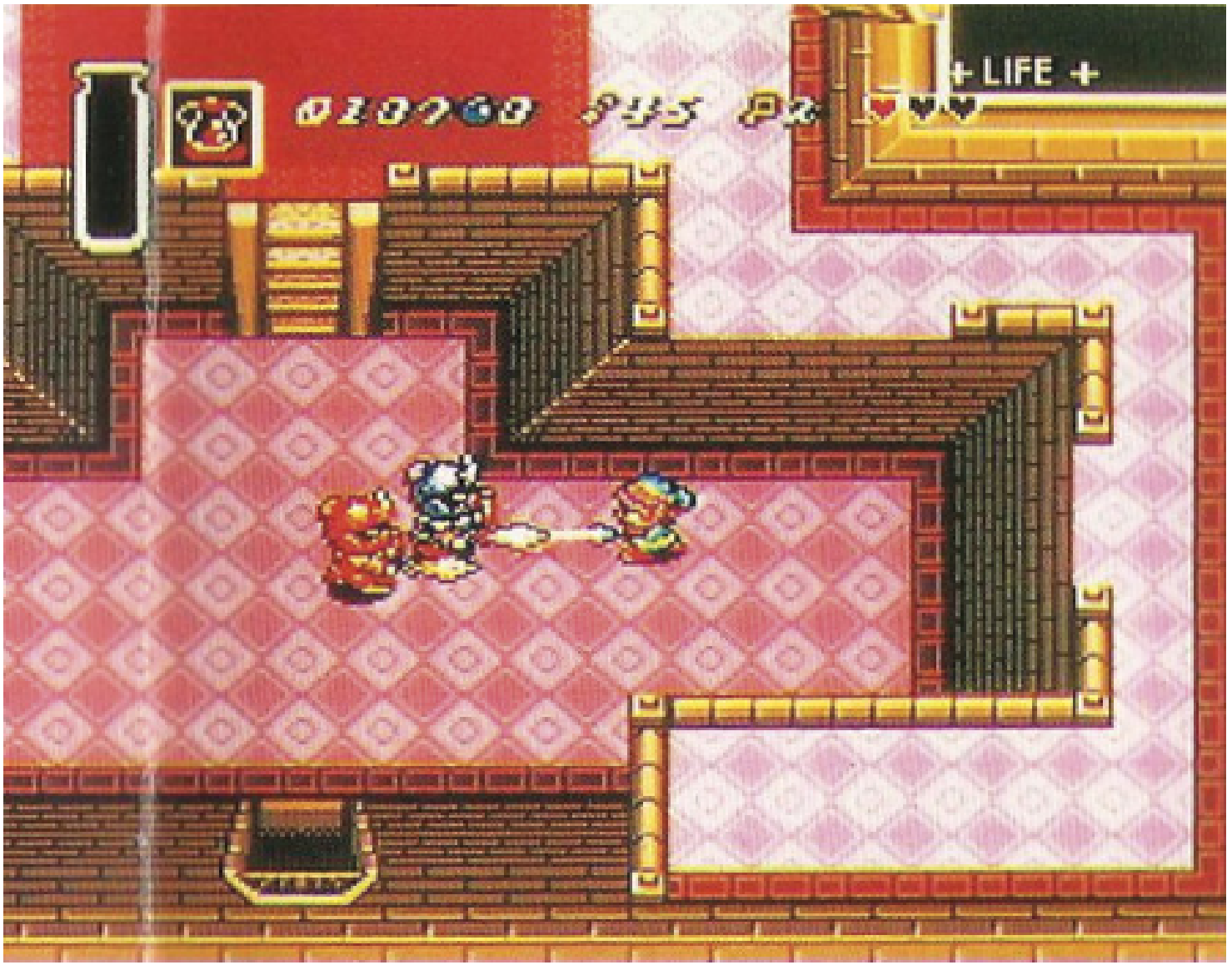
feature that got partially implemented before being scrapped would have allowed Link to dig a ditch with a shovel in swamp areas. Bombing the terrain would then cause the swamp water to fill the hole.

Another concept would have seen large brushfires spreading from use of the lantern in grassy areas. This mechanic later appeared in two *Zelda* games: *Four Swords Adventures* and *Breath of the Wild*.







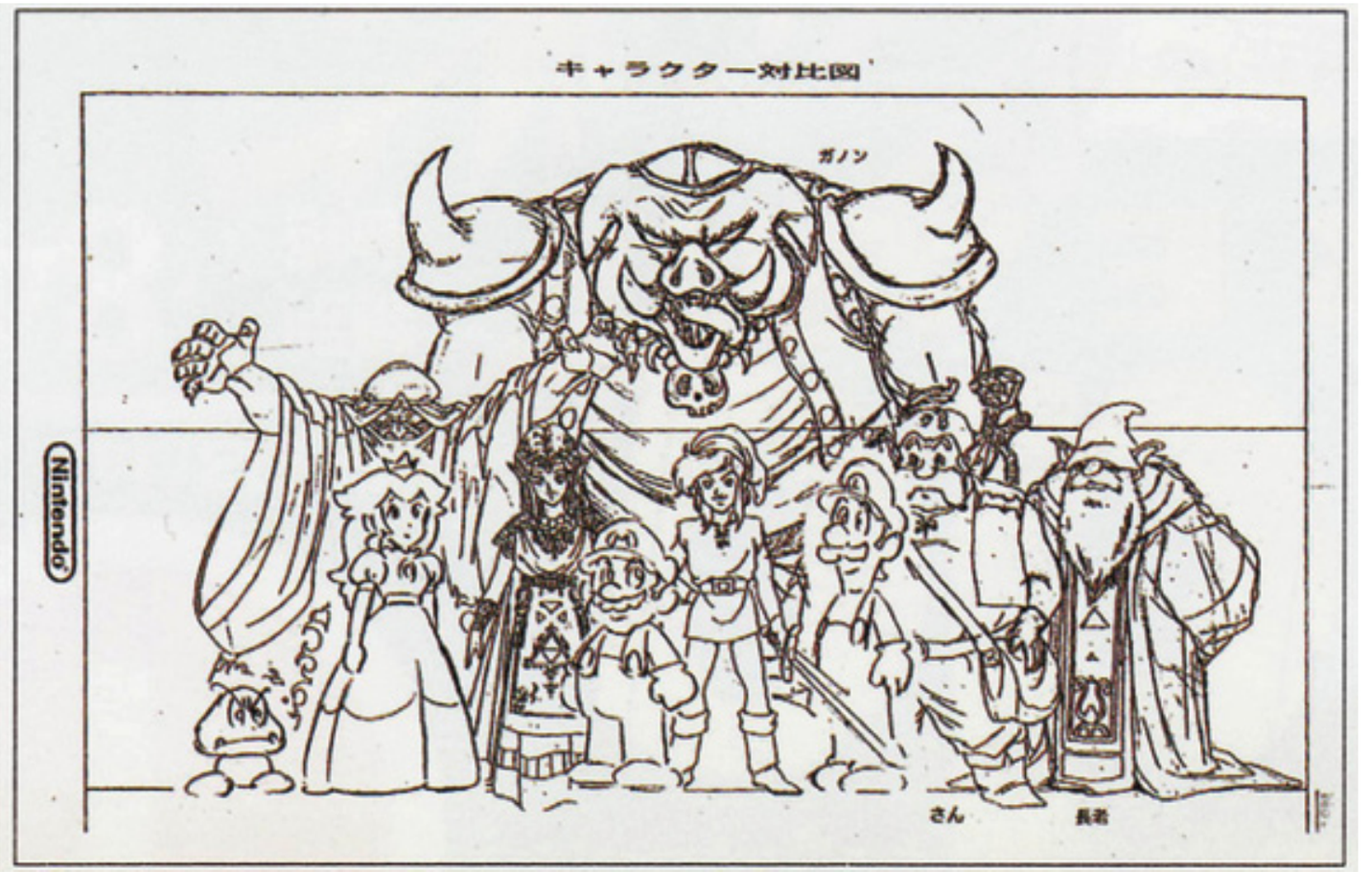


3 ZELDA 3

Early previews of the game reveal some notable differences from the final product. Can you spot them all?

4 CRANKY GANON

Ganon appears in *Animal Crossing New Leaf* as a “cranky” villager. His birthday is shown to be February 21, the same day *The Legend of Zelda* was released for the Famicom Disk System in 1986.



5 SUPER LINK BROS.

A Link to the Past makes several nods to the *Mario* franchise. Mario appears on several paintings hung around homes in Kakariko Village, and Chain Chomps appear in the Turtle Rock dungeon.

The rotating Guruguru bars that appear in *A Link to the Past* originated in *Super Mario Bros.*, where they’re called Fire Bars. However, they were originally intended for *The Legend of Zelda*; the developers felt they looked better in a *Mario* game and passed them between titles.

CANNON SOLDIER AND OTHER UNUSED ELEMENTS

As with *Super Mario World*, various items and characters were created for *A Link to the Past* but ultimately do not appear in the final game:

A stopwatch and a hunk of meat, similar to the Magical Clock and Enemy Bait from the first game, respectively.

Various background decorations. The skull statues were later used in the Game Boy Advance port.

A bat-like Dark World creature, and a sad version of the Bully's friend, who is only seen as being happy in the game despite being constantly kicked around.

A fully functional cannon-wielding soldier.

FINGER WEBS FOR SALE
ZORA'S WATERFALL

THE LOYAL PRIEST
SANCTUARY

The names of certain characters or items were adjusted during the English localization process. “Ocarina Boy” was changed to “Flute Boy,” the “M.C. Hammer” was renamed to the “Magic Hammer,” and “Loyal Priest” was changed to “Loyal Sage.” Due to Nintendo of America’s policies on potentially contentious religious iconography, all other religious references were changed for the North American release as well. The Church became the Sanctuary, Agahnim switched from a priest to a wizard, and Egyptian hieroglyphs that appeared in the Hylian language were removed. Most notably, the game’s subtitle, *Triforce of the Gods*, was changed to *A Link to the Past*.

8 WEAPON COMBOS

A Link to the Past almost featured a weapon combo mechanic that would enable Link to combine certain items for entirely new effects, such as arrows with bombs attached to them. This feature didn’t make it into the final game, but was included in *Link’s Awakening*.

9 GANON’S REVENGE

Several different subtitles were considered for *A Link to the Past*, including *Ganon’s Revenge*.

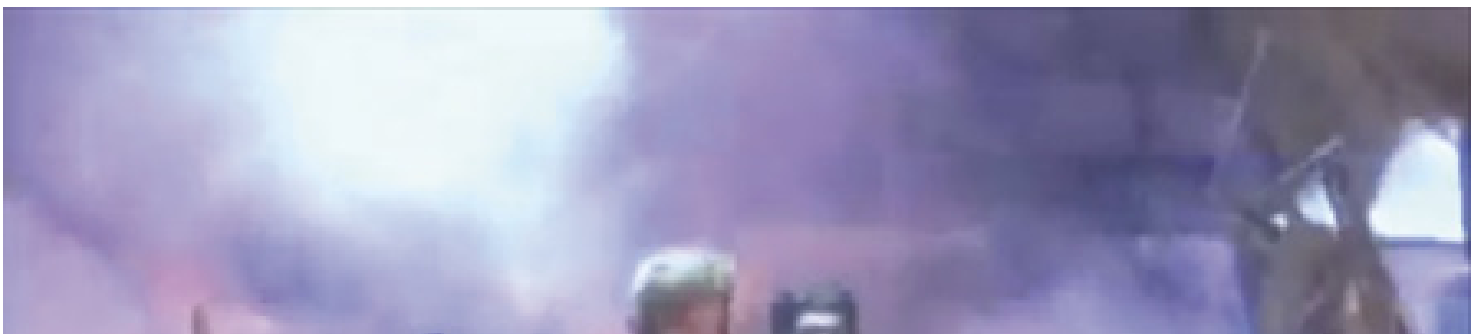
10 DARKNUT

Shigeru Miyamoto has noted that the Darknut soldier is one of his favorite characters in the *Zelda* series. In the NES game these enemies charge at Link with varying speed and can absorb attacks with their shields, making them quite formidable. The soldiers in *A Link to the Past* were given even more elaborate behavior, such as investigating sounds made by Link when they were previously unaware of his presence.

11 SUPER SMASH ZELDA

Link has appeared in every *Super Smash Bros.* game, bringing with him his usual bag of boomerangs, bombs, and boyishly good looks. Princess Zelda, Ganondorf, Sheik, and Young Link from *Ocarina of Time*, and *Wind Waker*’s Toon Link appear throughout the series as playable characters as well.

Link also lent his likeness to the Nintendo GameCube version of *Soulcalibur II*, and as a downloadable racer in *Mario Kart 8*.



12 DANCING COMMERCIAL

The Japanese commercial for *The Legend of Zelda: Triforce of the Gods* featured an ensemble dance number to a funky beat.

13 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA'S NAME

Mr. Miyamoto named Zelda after Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, the socialite wife of novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald. She was said to be a stunningly beautiful woman whose intense personality fueled much of her husband's writing. And, Mr. Miyamoto also just liked the way it sounded.

14 GREEK MYTHOLOGY

A Link to the Past makes numerous references to Greek mythology: the Mirror Shield, which also appears in Nintendo's *Kid Icarus*, was used by Perseus to defeat Medusa; the Pegasus Shoes are reminiscent of the winged sandals worn by Hermes; the Tower of Hera is named after Zeus' wife, Hera; and the bomb-throwing Hinox enemy is a cyclops.

15 IT'S A TOP SECRET TO EVERYONE

The Top Secret Room belongs to a young man named Chris Houlihan, who won a contest in *Nintendo Power* with a prize of being named in an upcoming Nintendo game. The room is filled with 45 Blue Rupees and a message from Mr. Houlihan himself stating, "My name is Chris Houlihan. This is my top secret room. Keep it between us, okay?"

Top secret, indeed, as this Easter egg went mostly undiscovered for many years, especially in the pre-Internet age. From a technical standpoint, the developers used this room as a failsafe for when the game doesn't know where Link should go. These occurrences are extremely rare, but players can force access to the room through a handful of methods. One of the easier (and earliest) techniques requires Link to Dash Attack from the Sanctuary to the secret Sewer Passageway entrance outside Hyrule Castle as quickly as possible. Upon exiting the room, the player appears as if exiting Link's house.

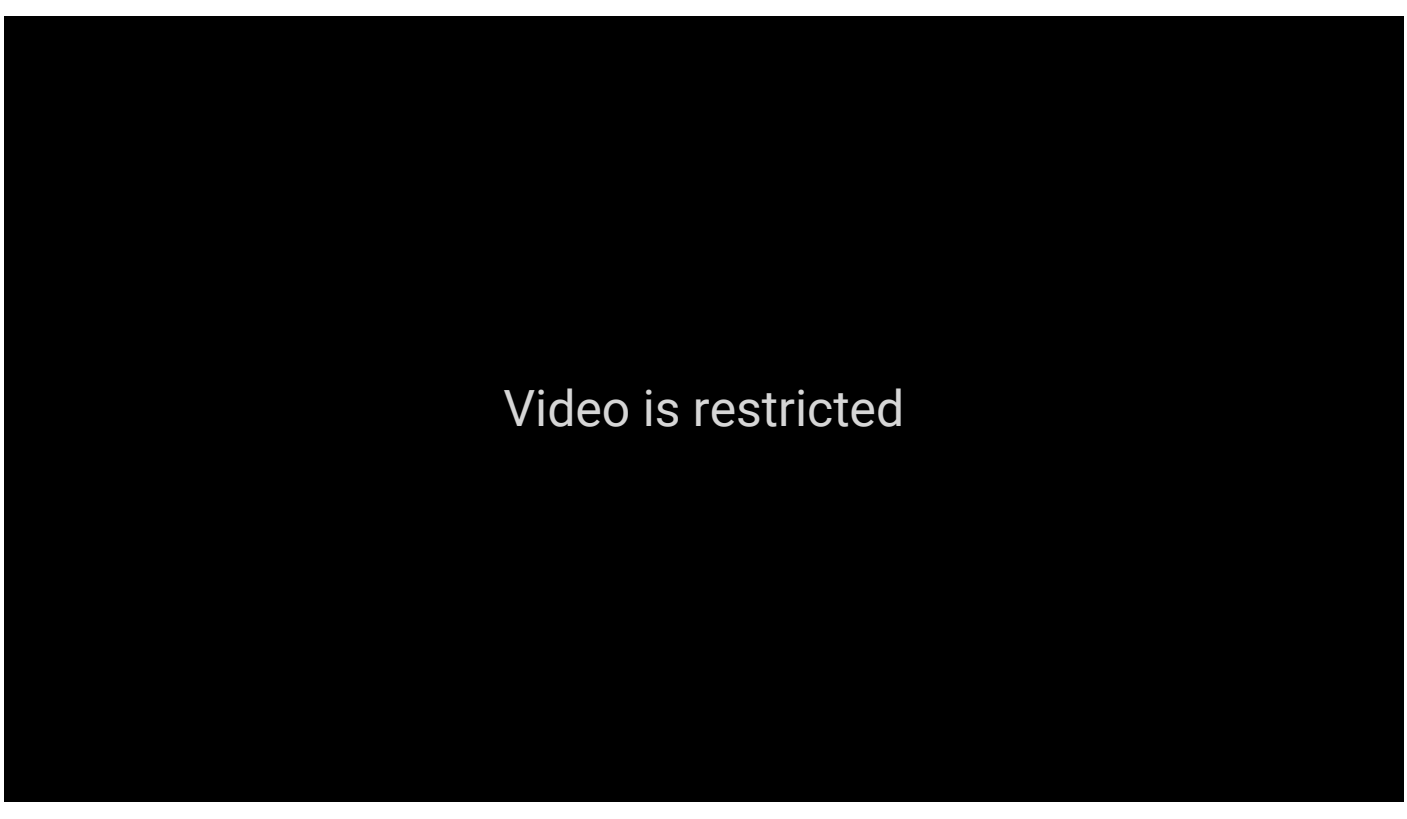
16 SOUNDTRACK

The official two-disc soundtrack, *The Legend of Zelda: Sound & Drama*, was released in Japan in 1994. The complete *A Link to the Past* soundtrack was included, as well as rearranged versions of select songs and tracks from the first game. The "Drama" in the album's name referred to a lengthy audio drama also on the disc where voice actors acted out a *Zelda*-themed skit.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

Confidential Information



Speedrunner Xelna

World Records Held: Any% (1h 23m 19s), 100% (1h 41m 53s), Low% (1h 24m 44s)

Shigeru Miyamoto once estimated that the average player would clear *A Link to the Past* in approximately 40 hours. Xelna, the current world record holder in multiple categories, can beat it in under two minutes.

While that's an unusually quick time that makes use of a series of "out of bounds" glitches that send Link straight from his house to the Triforce at the end of the game, the more traditional speedruns are no less fascinating. "I have very fond memories of *A Link to the Past* from when I was a child," says Xelna. "18-20 years later, I discovered *Speedrunslive.com* and Twitch. There was a whole community dedicated to speedrunning old games. On August 12, 2013, I stumbled upon Krysstal's stream (she only did one stream, four runs back to back). Back then, she was destroying the competition. I was very fortunate to be there. She broke the world record that day. That gameplay inspired me to pick up the game and speedrun it. I absolutely love execution-heavy games with cool-looking tricks and this is one of them. Little did I know I would still be at it today."

To get an idea for what each run entails, Xelna helps break down the most common categories before diving into a few specific tricks:

Any%: The most popular category of the game. The player must beat the game as fast as possible, without using major glitches or using the Save and Quit feature. It's just a good old "play through the game without skipping huge chunks of content" kind of run. I think that's why it's so popular, because it's very accessible.

100% (No Major Glitches, No Save & Quit): Pretty much the same thing as the category explained above except you also have to collect all Heart Pieces, the half magic upgrade, and all inventory items to their maximum level. The bombs and arrows capacity upgrades are not required.

Master Sword (No Major Glitches, with Save and Quit): This technique is a very easy category to pick up and learn. All

you have to do is beat the three Light World pendant dungeons and rush to the Lost Woods to retrieve the Master Sword. It's pretty straightforward. One run of this usually lasts around 22-26 minutes.

Reverse Boss Order (Everything Allowed): Using a ton of different glitches, it is possible to beat all the bosses in *A Link to the Past* in reverse order, starting from Ganon and finishing with the Armos Knights. The first 30 minutes of this run are item collection and walking around since you need to equip yourself to fight Ganon first and you can't get the Pegasus Boots yet. This is a very fun and crazy run to watch.

So what constitutes a "major glitch"? "It's a glitch that allows you to perform huge sequence breaks in the run thus skipping a lot of content," explains Xelna. "There are three known major glitches to date."

Out of Bounds (OoB): This glitch is performed by clipping through walls. Basically, you cheese the game's collision detection to exit the boundaries. In most cases, they involve frame perfect inputs. To ensure that you move for only one frame, you can tap the D-pad in combination with either the Dash button or sword slashes.

Yuzuhara's Bottle Adventure (YBA): Corrupting the memory of the game by using a potion in a bottle at the exact same time Link goes through a screen transition or a door. If used on the overworld (with a blue potion), it allows the player to use the Flute to fly around the overworld without even having the Flute in the inventory. If used indoors (dungeons or caves), it lets the player move two screens in the same direction instead of one. Using a Spin Attack while doing an indoor YBA lets you move three screens.

Exploration Glitch (EG): This is a set of glitches that alters the layer Link is standing on (lower layer, upper layer). You can then walk through walls and walk freely to your destination. This glitch allows the player to beat the game in under three minutes.

Basic

Wall Pumping

This is a technique that optimizes Link's walking pattern. When walking cardinally left or up, Link's movement begins on the two-pixel speed. Changes to the directional input resets his movement speed back to the beginning of the sequence. Therefore, if walking left or up along a wall, you can mash diagonals into the wall to repeatedly reset Link's movement to the two-pixel speed and avoid the slower one-pixel speed in the sequence. Optimal wall pumping can get Link to move at a constant rate of two pixels per frame, which is quite the improvement over his usual 1.5 pixel per frame walking speed. However, humans cannot wall pump fast enough to accomplish that, so in real time, this is more of a frame-saving technique.

There is also water pumping, air pumping, and ladder pumping, which are all variants of wall pumping and have the same logic.

Quick Hopping

A quick hop skips the 20-frame countdown that normally occurs when Link tries to hop a ledge. You can only perform quick hops after receiving the Pegasus Boots. You automatically quick hop if you are dashing. To do a quick hop while walking, press A when Link is up against a ledge.

Advanced

Hera Bomb Jump

You can bomb jump across the pit where the Moon Pearl big chest is in the Tower of Hera. To do so, position Link close to the pit within a six-pixel window, and completely on the right side. Make sure to be facing down. You can slash your sword and hold your sword out facing down and slowly back up toward the pit. Or, you can walk up, then start charging a dash. While the dash is still charging (you have a 31-frame window, simply put, half a second) turn around and face down. Release the Dash button once you're facing down to avoid dashing. Now, place a bomb, then tap Left so Link is facing left. Don't be too close to the wall. Wait for a tiny bit, around two seconds from the moment you place the bomb, then dash on the left wall and bonk. If done properly, you land above your bomb and the explosion boosts you across the pit. This skips having to go up one floor and drop down.

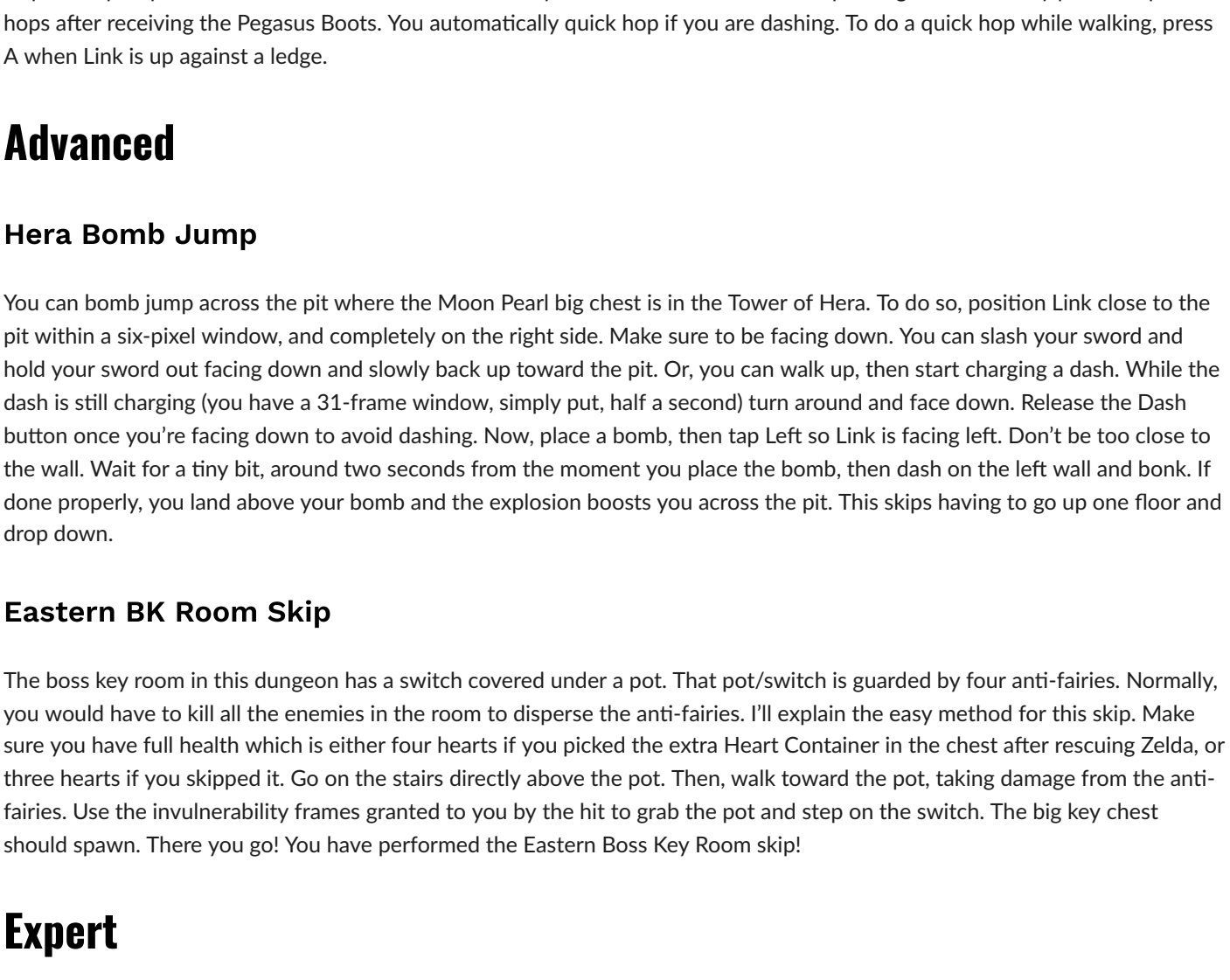
Eastern BK Room Skip

The boss key room in this dungeon has a switch covered under a pot. That pot/switch is guarded by four anti-fairies. Normally, you would have to kill all the enemies in the room to disperse the anti-fairies. I'll explain the easy method for this skip. Make sure you have full health which is either four hearts if you picked the extra Heart Container in the chest after rescuing Zelda, or three hearts if you skipped it. Go on the stairs directly above the pot. Then, walk toward the pot, taking damage from the anti-fairies. Use the invulnerability frames granted to you by the hit to grab the pot and step on the switch. The big key chest should spawn. There you go! You have performed the Eastern Boss Key Room skip!

Expert

Hovering

It takes the game two frames to check and realize that Link is over a pit. On the very first frame of that check, you want to initiate a dash charge by pressing A, which you can only hold up to 31 frames. On frame 32, Link actually starts his dash and falls down. After pressing A for up to 31 frames, release it for exactly one frame. Re-press A for up to 31 frames, release for exactly one frame. It's during that single frame between the A presses that you can advance. Done repeatedly, you can cross any gap where there's a floor to walk onto on both sides. The most notable application of this is in Ganon's Tower to skip the Moldorm refight. You could also hover in the Ice Palace and not have to do the bomb jump although that one is not really faster in a speedrun. It saves a bomb and earns you some swag points. Hovering is very, very hard to do. Practice a lot and don't give up!



The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past provided the mold from which all future non-3D *Zelda* games would be birthed. The game's direct lineage shifted primarily to Nintendo's handheld devices, where it continues to thrive to this day.

The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening

1993, Game Boy

What began as a handheld port of *A Link to the Past* eventually became an original entry in the series. Produced by Shigeru Miyamoto and directed by Takashi Tezuka (*The Legend of Zelda*, *Super Mario World*, *A Link to the Past*), *Link's Awakening* does not feature Hyrule, the Triforce, or Princess Zelda. Although the game is modeled heavily after *A Link to the Past*, it's filled with oddities to the point where the developers have stated it "felt like making a parody of *Zelda*." Other Nintendo characters such as Mario, Kirby, and Yoshi make guest appearances.

BS Zelda no Densetsu Series

1995-1999, Satellaview

Several original *Zelda* games were released exclusively for download on the Super Famicom's Satellaview system. They were considered spin-offs from the main series and did not feature Link, but instead the player's male or female Satellaview avatar. The first game, whose title translates to *BS The Legend of Zelda*, was a 16-bit remake of the original 8-bit game. Other BS games made use of the Satellaview's SoundLink feature, in which live radio narration would be synced to in-game events. Like with the first *BS Zelda* title, *BS The Legend of Zelda: Ancient Stone Tablets* was very similar to *A Link to the Past*. Although they were extremely popular at the time of their release, like all Satellaview exclusives, they have been largely lost to the annals of time.

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

1998, Nintendo 64

Ocarina of Time did for 3D action-adventure games what *Super Mario 64* did for 3D platformers. Using one of their most beloved properties, Nintendo defined the standard which all other similar games would be held to. Series mainstays such as dungeons, Pieces of Heart, Cuccos, and the Master Sword all returned, while influential new elements were introduced, such as Link's beloved horse, Epona, lock-on targeting in combat, and a time-traveling mechanic that was originally intended for *The Legend of Zelda* for the NES.

Although the final game has an expansive outdoor world to explore, concerns of memory limitations led the developers to conceptualize a game where Link would be restricted to Ganon's castle. Similar to *Super Mario 64*, Link would be able to venture to other areas through paintings. The boss battle against Ganondorf where the villain rides his horse in and out of paintings is a nod to the game's original concept.

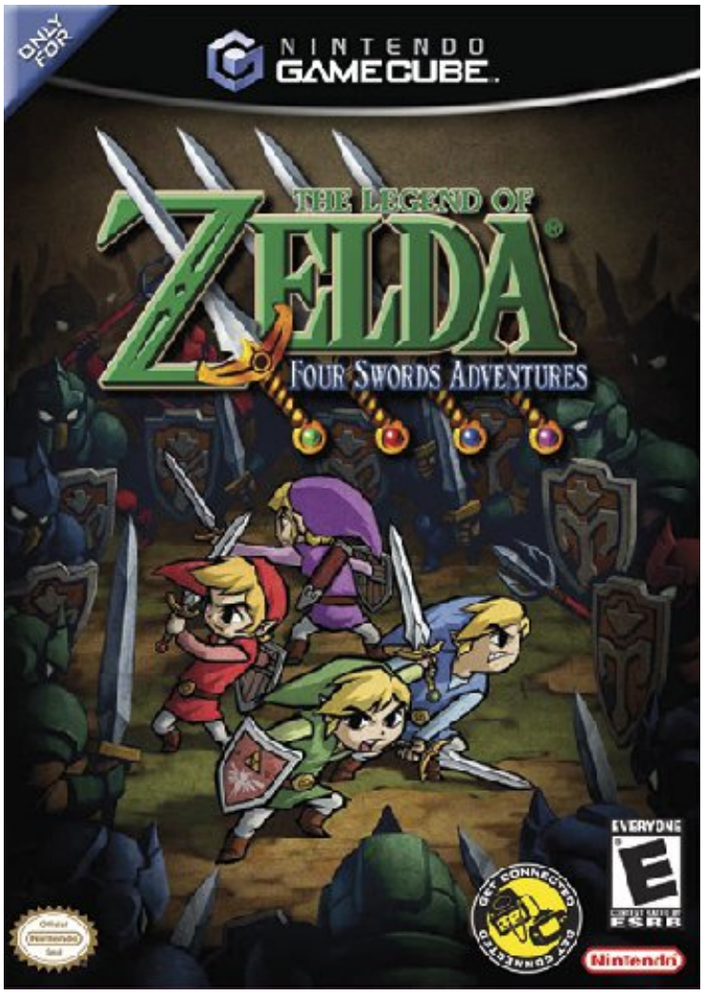
With the release of *Ocarina of Time*, the *Zelda* franchise split in two distinct directions: traditional top-down games heavily inspired by *A Link to the Past*, and large-scale 3D games building off the foundation established by *Ocarina of Time*, *Majora's Mask*, *The Wind Waker*, *Twilight Princess*, *Skyward Sword*, and *Breath of the Wild*.

The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons / Oracle of Ages

2001, Game Boy Color

Developed by Capcom's Flagship subsidiary, the *Oracle* titles are easily the most ambitious handheld *Zelda* games. Although each provided its own separate adventure, they could also be played as an interconnected experience. By beating one, a password would enable the other to serve as a sequel, with events in the game changing based on the order in which they were played. Beating both together reveals the game's true ending, including the climactic battle with Ganon.

Originally conceived as a trilogy, the third title was canceled due to the complexity of the interlocking system. The games appear largely similar to the Game Boy Color port of *Link's Awakening*, but each with its own unique gameplay twists: *Oracle of Ages* emphasizes puzzles and features a time-traveling mechanic, while *Oracle of Seasons* prioritizes action and grants Link an item which allows him to shift the seasons, opening up a multitude of gameplay possibilities.



The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures

2004, Nintendo GameCube

As the title implies, *Four Swords Adventures* greatly expands upon the *Four Swords* portion of the preceding *Zelda* game. The Hyrulean Adventure campaign can be played by up to four players, with each player using a Game Boy Advance linked to the GameCube as a controller. The Links can use special formations to solve puzzles or overcome enemies. Due to the game's unique formation system, there are always four Links in play, even in single-player.

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past and Four Swords

2002, Game Boy Advance

The Game Boy Advance port of *A Link to the Past* is notable for adding the franchise's first-ever Multiplayer Mode. In *Four Swords*, up to four players take control of their own uniquely color-coded Link and cooperatively tackle dungeons. There is a light competitive element where the player with the most Rupees at the end of a stage receives a special reward.

The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap

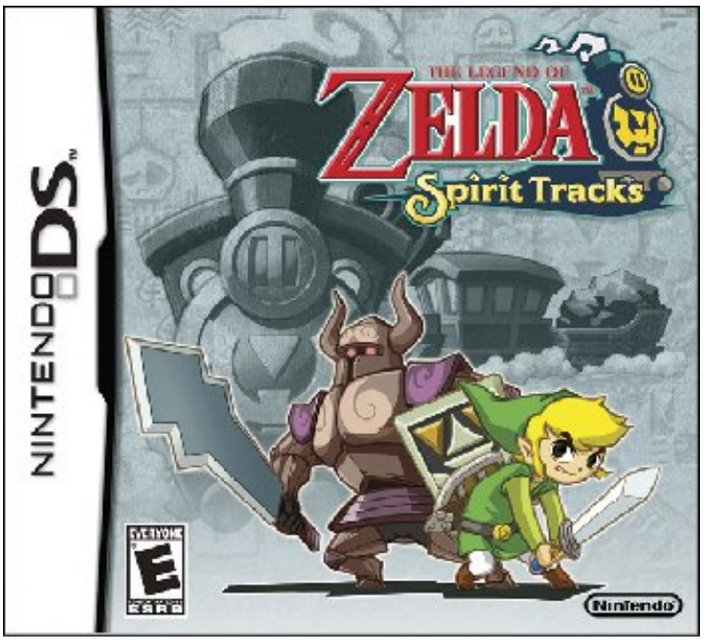
2004, Game Boy Advance

Developed by the *Oracle* team at Capcom, *The Minish Cap* serves as a prequel to *Four Swords*. Link's magical talking cap can shrink the hero down to the size of a Hyrulean bug (a "minish"), which plays heavily into exploration and puzzle-solving. Like with all other non-3D titles, *The Minish Cap* was cut directly from the same cloth as *A Link to the Past*.

The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass

2007, Nintendo DS

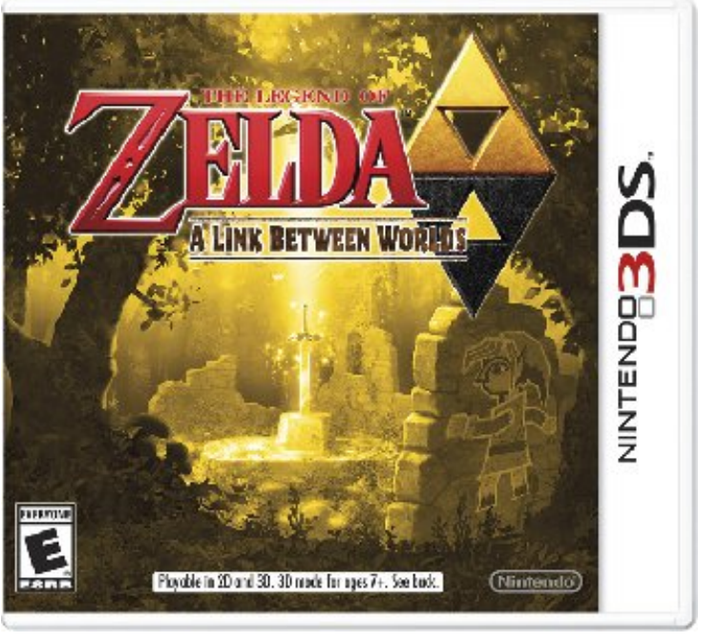
Taking place immediately after the events of *The Wind Waker*, *Phantom Hourglass* combined the 3D visuals of the console *Zelda* games with the top-down perspective of *A Link to the Past* and its kin. The sea-faring element of *The Wind Waker* returns, as Link must travel to different islands before exploring them on foot. A multiplayer Battle Arena Mode was also included, pitting Link against a player controlling three Phantom Guardians.



The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks

2009, Nintendo DS

Taking place in the same timeline as *The Wind Waker* and *Phantom Hourglass*, albeit a century later, *Spirit Tracks* also featured similar cel-shaded visuals and retained *Phantom Hourglass*'s top-down perspective. Link has traded in the previous games' water-bound vessels for a steam-powered train which he uses to traverse the overworld.



The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds

2013, Nintendo 3DS

A Link Between Worlds progressed the "Decline of Hyrule" timeline that *A Link to the Past* and its canonical successors exist in. The game is heavily reminiscent of *A Link to the Past*, albeit with modernized 3D visuals. The game is split between two alternate versions of the same area: Hyrule and Lorule, similar to the Light World and Dark World from *A Link to the Past*. *A Link*

Between Worlds subverts the time-honored tradition of obtaining items from dungeons by allowing Link to rent them for Rupees. This involves some risk as being defeated returns the rented items to the shopkeeper with no refund. Permanently buying the items is possible, but costs more. This system allows players to choose their equipment combinations much earlier than usual, and also gives Rupees an increased value over what they generally have in other *Zelda* games where items are often obtained without them.

Link's most notable ability in *A Link Between Worlds* is the power to merge into walls, appearing as a mural that can move along the wall's surface. This allows Link to reach areas he wouldn't otherwise be able to, including Lorule. The developers also made an effort to return the series to its roots, allowing players to enter most of the game's dungeons in whichever order they desired.

The Legend of Zelda: Tri Force Heroes

2015, Nintendo 3DS

Positioned as a sequel to *A Link Between Worlds*, *Tri Force Heroes* features three-way cooperative multiplayer. Much of the gameplay focuses around a totem pole-inspired mechanic, where the three Links can stack on top of each other to reach greater heights or perform special maneuvers. Numerous different outfits can be crafted and worn to gain new abilities, including Princess Zelda's dress.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past Credits

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi

Producer

Shigeru Miyamoto

Director

Takashi Tezuka

Script Writer

Kensuke Tanabe

Assistant Directors

Yasuhisa Yamamura

Yoichi Yamada

Object Designers

Soichiro Tomita

Takaya Imamura

Background Designers

Masanao Arimoto

Tsuyoshi Watanabe

Program Director

Toshihiko Nakago

Main Programmer

Yasunari Soejima

Object Programmer

Kazuaki Morita

Programmers

Tatsuo Nishiyama

Yu¯ ichi Yamamoto

Yoshihiro Nomoto

Eiji Noto

Satoru Takahata

Toshio Iwawaki

Shigehiro Kasamatsu

Yasunari Nishida

Sound Composer

Ko¯ ji Kondo¯

Coordinators

Keizo¯ Kato¯

Takao Shimizu

Printed Art Work

Yoichi KotabeHideki Fujii

Yoshiaki Koizumi

Yasuhiro Sakai

Tomoaki Kuroume

English Script Writers

Daniel Owsen

Hiroyuki Yamada

Special Thanks To

Nobuo Okajima

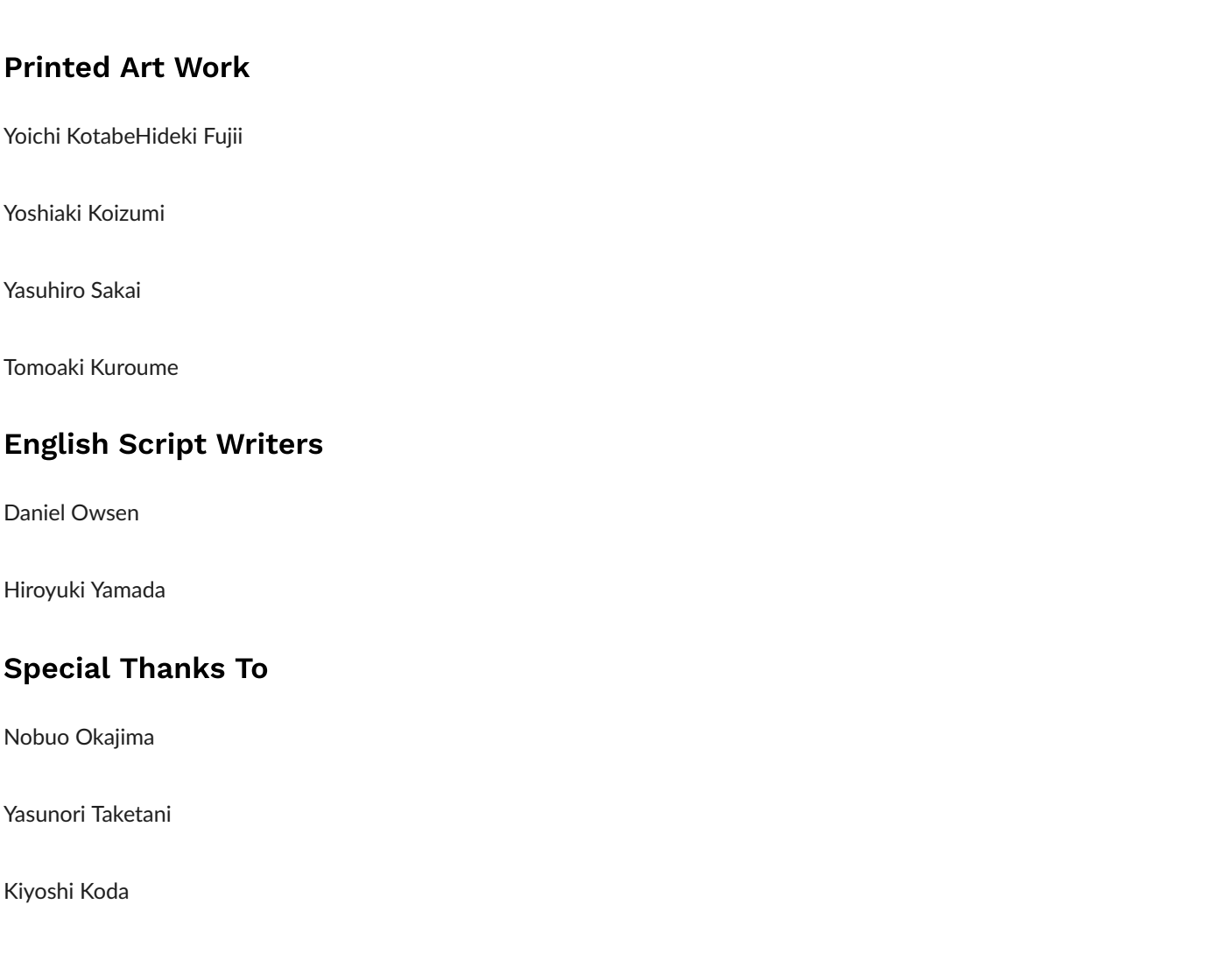
Yasunori Taketani

Kiyoshi Koda

Takamitsu Kuzuhara

Hironobu Kakui

Shigeki Yamashiro



Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

Overview

DEVELOPER

Nintendo EAD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: August 5, 1995

NA: October 4, 1995

EU: January 6, 1996

This story happened a long long time ago…

This is a story about a baby and Yoshi…

A stork hurries across the dusky, pre-dawn sky. In his bill, he supports a pair of twins who are to be delivered to their parents as soon as possible. Suddenly, something appears between the clouds and races towards the stork with blinding speed!

"SSCCRREEEEECH!!!," it screams. "These babies are mine!"

Snatching only one baby, the creature vanishes into the darkness from whence it came. Oh no! The second baby falls undetected towards the open sea…

The kidnapper is Kamek, an evil Magikoopa from the Koopa Kingdom. Having divined last night that twin babies born this morning will bring disaster to the Koopa family, he arranged for an early morning ambush.

Returning to his castle, Kamek realizes that he missed the other baby. He orders his toadies. Go forth and find the other baby!! Don't let his parents get him back! Ever!!

Meanwhile, the second baby does not fall into the sea after all…it lands safely on Yoshi's back! And right after him drops a map!!

This paradise is Yoshi's Island. And on this island live lots of different Yoshis. These Yoshis are naturally laid back and relaxed, but this is a calamity and everyone is in a state of panic. As the Yoshis frantically yell over each other, the baby insistently points at something.

Yes! The baby can sense the other baby's location. All the Yoshis quickly agree to help carry the baby to its destination by using a relay system not unlike the old Pony Express.

The Green Yoshi draws first honors.

Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

Development

While *Super Mario World* was meant to sell the Super NES, nearly half a decade later its sequel was positioned to help keep the SNES alive. And what a difference those few years made! *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island* exudes supreme confidence by the developers in their craft: stages are larger and more intricate; gameplay is deeper and more demanding; and the hand-drawn storybook aesthetic is still a sight to behold many decades later.

Knowing this would be the final *Mario* game for the Super NES, producer Shigeru Miyamoto and the Nintendo EAD team didn't hold back. Many partially implemented concepts for *Super Mario World* were left on the cutting room floor, yet in *Yoshi's Island* very few ideas ended up being jettisoned once development was underway. The team had aspired to create a true Yoshi-centric adventure for years, believing there was plenty of room for the character to grow beyond what players had seen in the previous game.

Yoshi's signature enemy-eating abilities from *Super Mario World* were heavily upgraded. Yoshi could now swallow enemies to create an Egg, and carry up to six Eggs at a time, which happily followed behind him in his Egg queue. Eggs in the queue could then be aimed and thrown using a targeting reticle. Nearly every puzzle, gimmick, and boss in *Yoshi's Island* was built around this Egg-throwing mechanic. For example, Shy Guys on stilts couldn't be tongued from the front, but hitting them with an Egg knocked them off their stilts, making them vulnerable. Eggs could be used to change certain terrain types, or ricocheted off walls and skipped across water for trick shots. Collectibles were automatically collected when hit by Eggs. Most bosses were not so much difficult, as they were imaginative ways to show off the developers' clever design, sense of humor, and technical exploits.

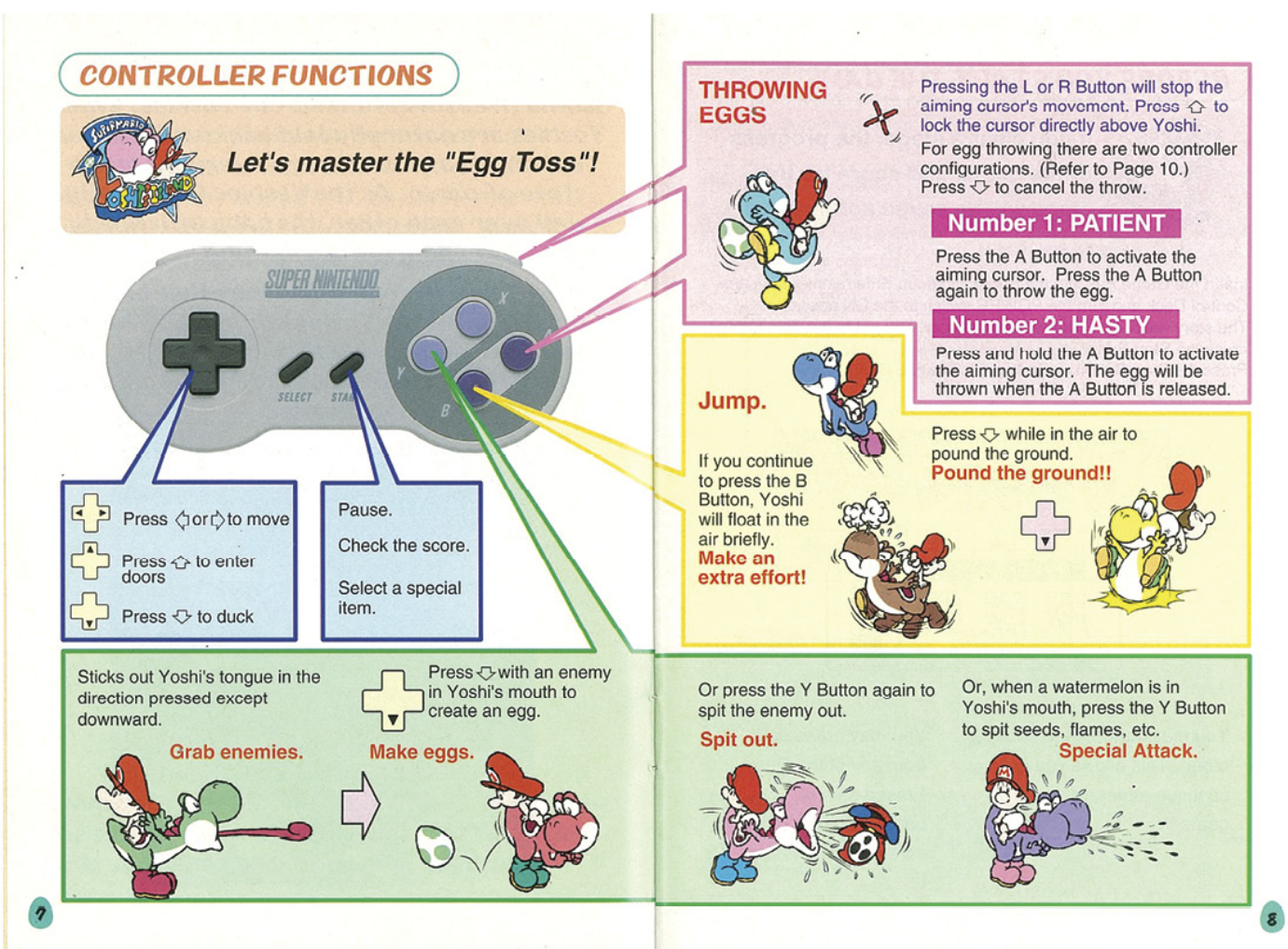
A PREQUEL TO THE ORIGINAL

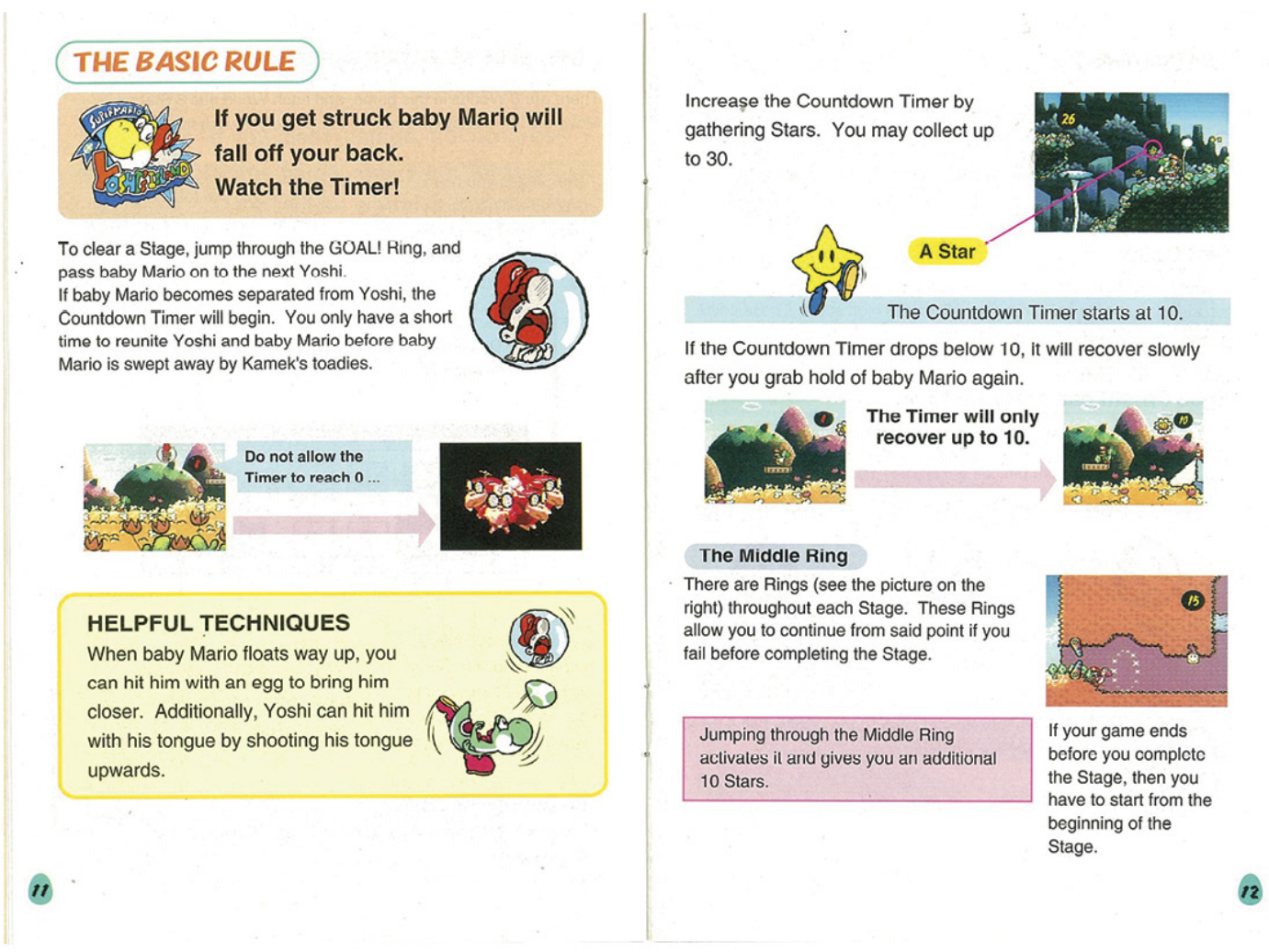
Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island actually serves as a prequel to the original, with Mario, Luigi, and Bowser appearing as babies. This further integrates Yoshi into the *Super Mario* mythos, while also somewhat retconning Mario and Yoshi's first encounter in *Super Mario World*. Baby Mario himself takes a literal backseat in *Yoshi's Island*, riding his delightful dinosaur escort throughout the entire game.

Super Mario World's Block switches were used as the primary difficulty modifier, but *Yoshi's Island* took a different approach. The elaborate level design and diverse collectibles encouraged multiple playthroughs, and the more complex gameplay cultivated perfection. Yet, in some ways, the game was also made more accessible. Mr. Miyamoto strived to break free of what he considered a traditional yet "absurd" mechanic in video games where touching an enemy resulted in death.

In *Yoshi's Island*, taking damage from most sources usually results in Baby Mario floating around the screen in a bubble, crying. A short countdown timer begins, and Baby Mario is kidnapped if it reaches zero, resulting in the loss of one "life" and a level restart. If Yoshi touches the bubble before the countdown ends, Baby Mario is rescued and the player can continue through the level as if nothing had happened.

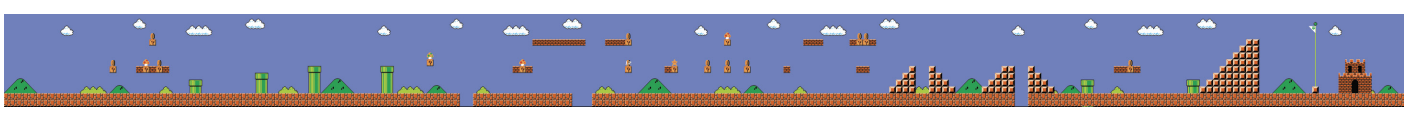
As remarkable today as it was upon release, *Yoshi's Island* is a monument to Nintendo EAD at the apex of its 16-bit achievements.



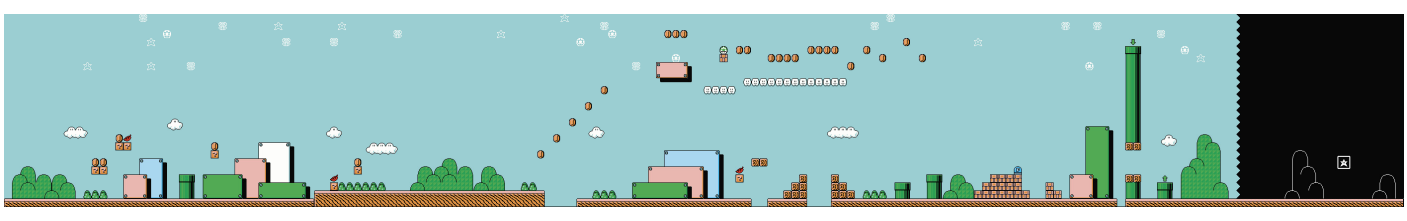


Level Design

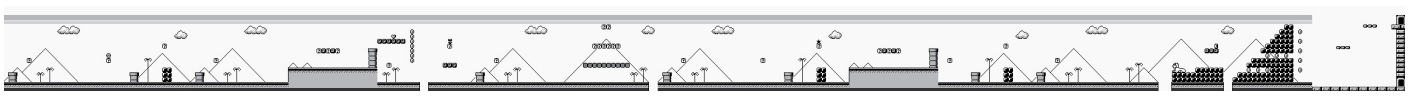
The stage layout in *Yoshi's Island* differs greatly from previous *Super Mario* games, which generally followed a linear horizontal path. Stages in *Yoshi's Island* tend to have facets of verticality to them, somewhat similar to *Super Mario Bros. 2*, which was initially developed as a separate Japanese game before being rebranded as a *Mario* title by Nintendo of America.



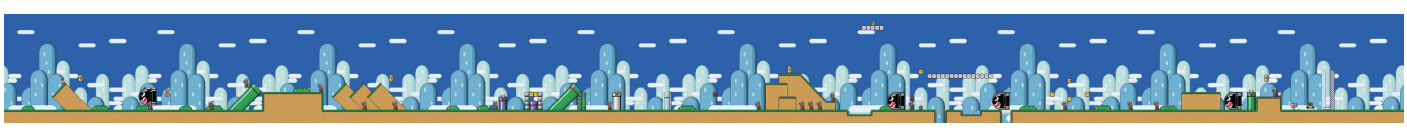
Super Mario Bros.



Super Mario Bros. 3



Super Mario Land



Super Mario World

Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

ROUGH TERRAIN AHEAD

Nintendo further modified the distinct worlds in *Yoshi's Island* by making the vast majority of the terrain rugged, rather than perfectly flat as with previous *Super Mario* games and most other 2D platformers before and since.

Yoshi

As revealed in *Super Mario World*, Yoshi is from a species of identical color-coded dinosaurs. Yoshi's *Island* emphasizes this aspect of the character, with Green Yoshi being the first to carry Baby Mario on his adventure. At the end of each stage, Baby Mario is handed off to one of seven other colored Yoshis. While the number of different Yoshi types was doubled since *Super Mario World*, they all play exactly the same this time around.

Green Yoshi

Appears in the first stage of each world, as well as special levels, minigames, and King Bowser's Castle.

Pink Yoshi

Appears in the second stage of each world.

Light Blue Yoshi

Appears in the third stage of each world.

Yellow Yoshi

Appears in the fourth stage of each world (Forts).

Purple Yoshi

Appears in the fifth stage of each world.

Brown Yoshi

Appears in the sixth stage of each world.

Red Yoshi

Appears in the seventh stage of each world.

Blue Yoshi

Appears in the eighth stage of each world (Castles).

Vehicular Transformations

Also new to Yoshi's Island are vehicular transformations. Touching a Morph Bubble transforms Yoshi into a vehicle with unique capabilities. The transformation is limited, however, and if Yoshi does not reach the Yoshi Block and transform back, he is sucked back to the Morph Bubble and must do the vehicle section over again!

Car

Helicopter

Mole Tank

Submarine

Train

Yoshi can also ski and turns into a giant uncontrollable snowball if he hits something, but that classifies more as an accident than a transformation.

Baby Mario

Baby Mario's bond with his brother allows him to guide the Yoshis to Luigi's location, albeit by taking the longest possible route through every location on the island. Baby Mario can only be controlled directly by grabbing a Super Star, at which point the toddler dons a *Super* Cape, allowing him to run on walls, ceilings, and even spikes for a brief time!

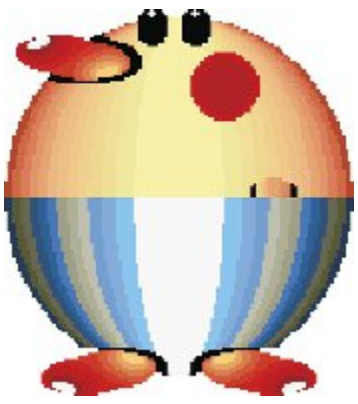
Baby Luigi

Baby Peach must have been in another castle because Baby Luigi is the one that needs rescuing this time! Kidnapped along with the stork who was carrying him, Baby Luigi waits for Yoshi and Baby Mario to defeat Kamek and Baby Bowser before the Mario Bros. can start their illustrious life as the kingdom's heroes.

Nintendo Power provided players with an in-depth look at Yoshi's Island.

Bosses

Burt the Bashful

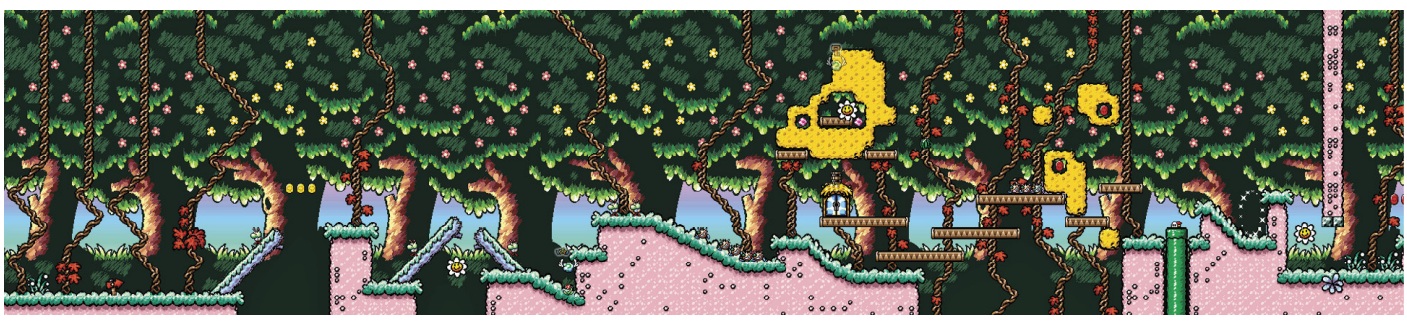


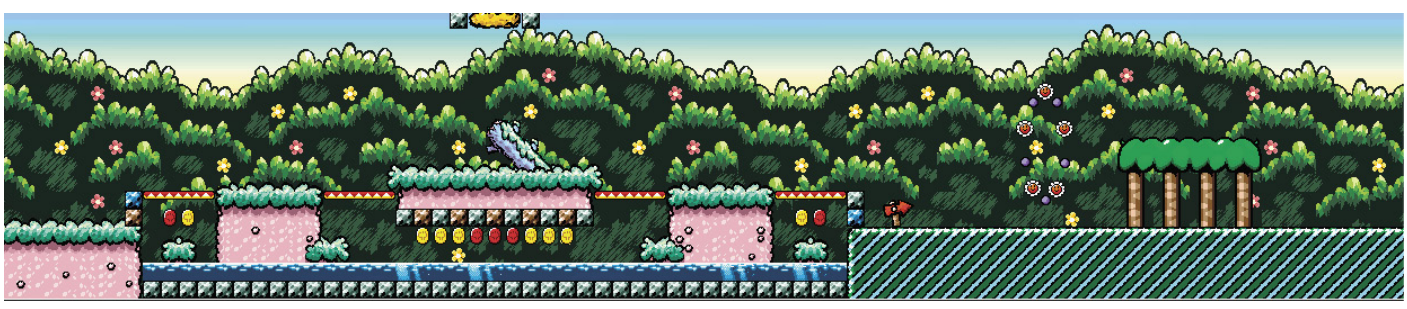
Hitting Burt causes his pants to fall down bit by bit. When Burt is completely nude he turns a bright red and deflates. Wait, what?

Salvo the Slime

When this embiggened Slime is hit by an Egg, he is reduced in size and releases Lemon Drop enemies from his body. Yum!

Featured Stage: 1-7: Touch Fuzzy, Get Dizzy





Bosses

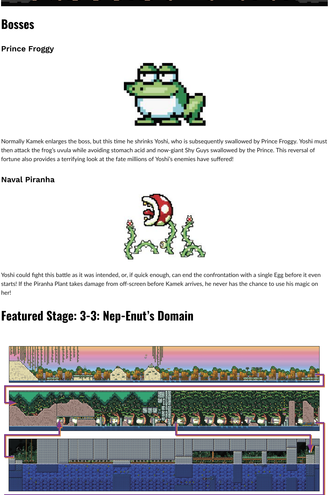
Bigger Boo

This battle subverts the classic Boo encounters. Normally, looking at a Boo is a good thing, as it turns them intangible and allows the player to pass by safely. However, Yoshi can't hit Bigger Boo when the ghost is in this state, so Eggs need to be ricocheted off the walls while Yoshi is facing away from this boss in order to cause damage. Pretty cool!

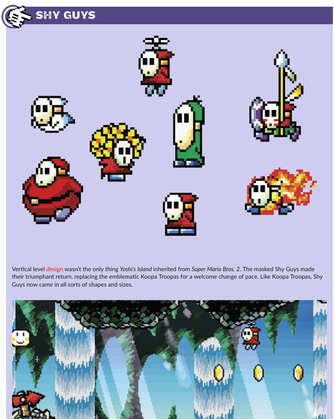
Roger the Potted Ghost

Roger's pot must be pushed off a platform while two Shy Guys push from the other side, slowing Yoshi's efforts. Just try not to think too much about a world where giant ghosts could grow out of decorative flower pots.

Featured Stage: 2-6: Cave of the Mystery Maze



World 3



Bosses

Prince Froggy

Normally Kamek enlarges the boss, but this time he shrinks Yoshi, who is subsequently swallowed by Prince Froggy. Yoshi must then attack the frog's uvula while avoiding stomach acid and now-giant Shy Guys swallowed by the Prince. This reversal of fortune also provides a terrifying look at the fate millions of Yoshi's enemies have suffered!

Naval Piranha

Yoshi could fight this battle as it was intended, or, if quick enough, can end the confrontation with a single Egg before it even starts! If the Piranha Plant takes damage from off-screen before Kamek arrives, he never has the chance to use his magic on her!

Featured Stage: 3-3: Nep-Enut's Domain

SHY GUYS

Vertical level design wasn't the only thing Yoshi's Island inherited from *Super Mario Bros. 2*. The masked Shy Guys made their triumphant return, replacing the emblematic Koopa Troopas for a welcome change of pace. Like Koopa Troopas, Shy Guys now came in all sorts of shapes and sizes.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

World 4

Bosses

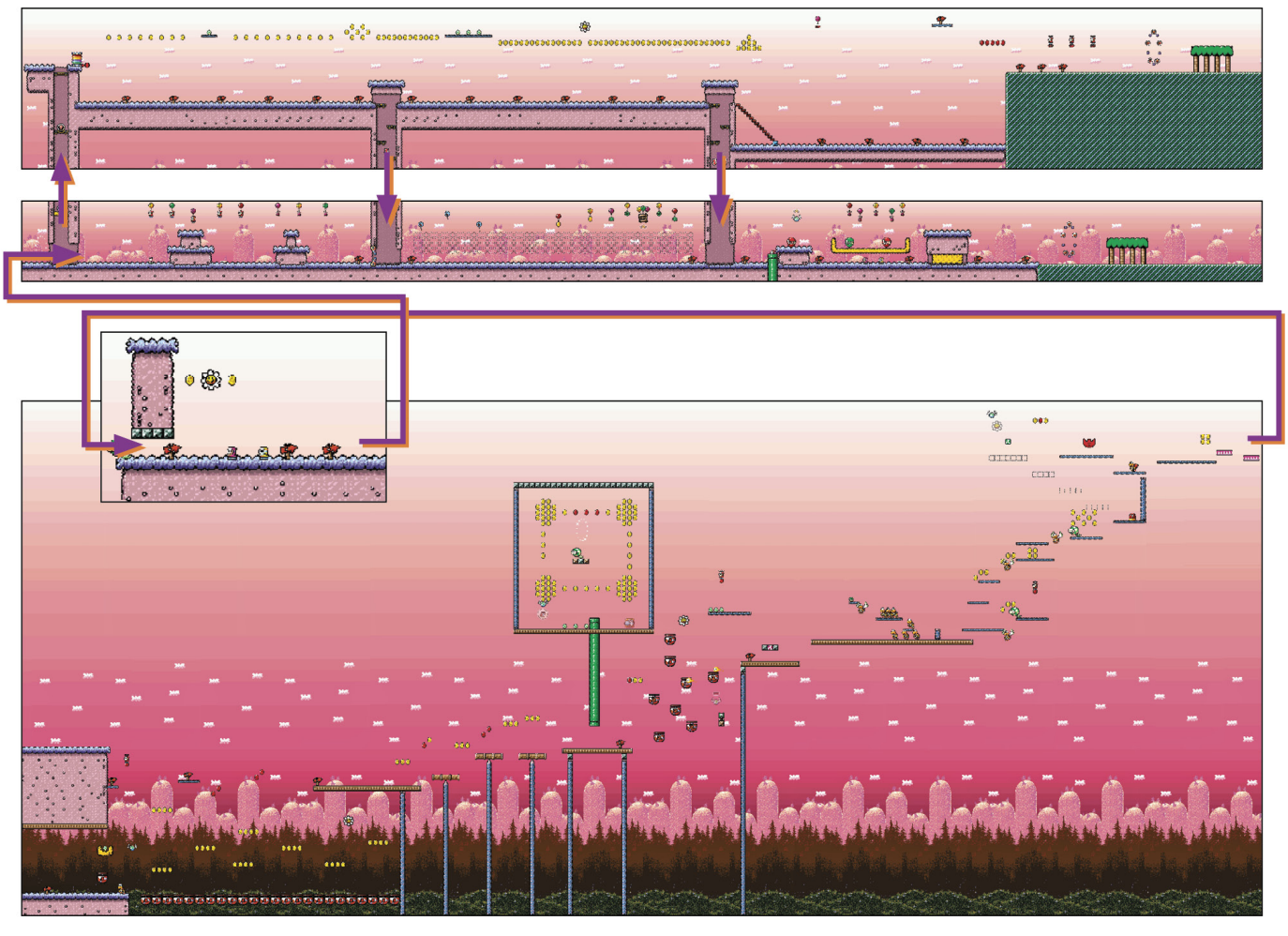
Marching Milde

Ground-pounding this boss produces two smaller copies. Ground-pounding one of those has the same effect, and on and on until the smallest Mildes have all expired. Proper timing can actually allow Yoshi to stomp on multiple Mildes at once. This is also the only boss in the game that can be eaten!

Hookbill the Koopa

Koopas appear less generously in *Yoshi's Island* than in most *Super Mario* games, but this enormous Red Koopa Troopa helps balance out that deficiency. Yoshi must knock Hookbill over with Eggs to stomp on his unprotected underside.

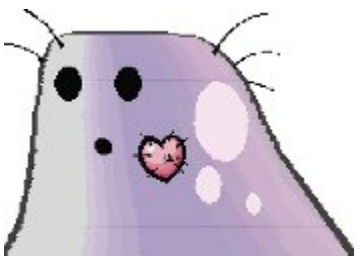
Featured Stage: 4-3: Don't Look Back!



World 5

Bosses

Sluggy the Unshaven

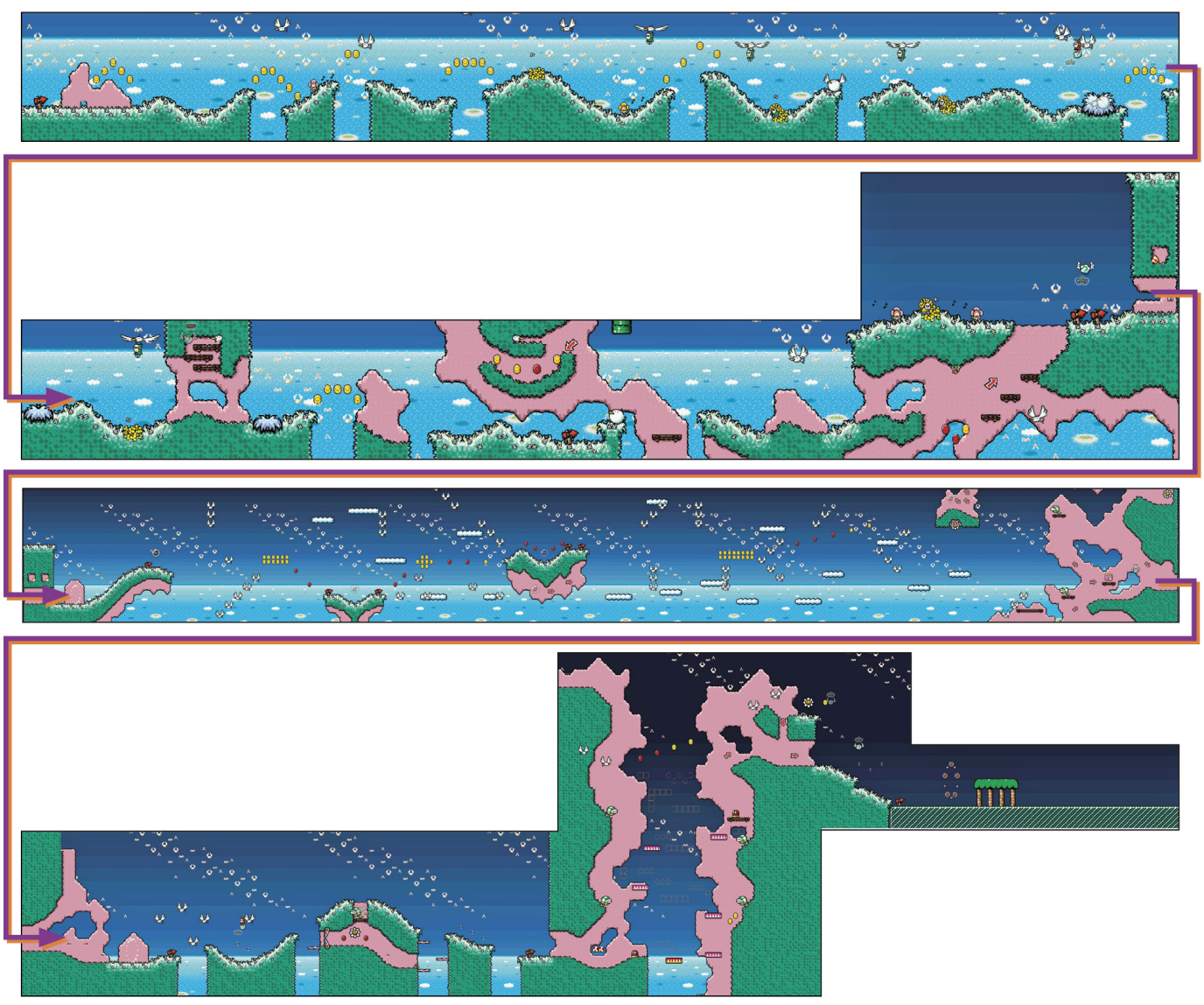


Sluggy makes brilliant use of the game's advanced sprite-manipulation techniques. This enlarged Sluggy's heart is his only weak point, but it's protected by his blob-like form. Hitting Sluggy with Eggs puts dents in the gelatinous giant, eventually carving a path that exposes the heart.

Raphael the Raven

One of the coolest *Super Mario* boss encounters of all time, Yoshi and Raphael's showdown takes place ON THE MOON. It's admittedly a very petite moon, but a moon nonetheless. This boss battle has a particularly hectic soundtrack, letting you know that you're in for a fight. As Yoshi moves around the moon, the screen rotates with him, creating a dizzying, but visually impressive, experience.

Featured Stage: 5-5: Goonie Rides!



World 6

Bosses

Tap-Tap the Red Nose

Tap-Tap is an invincible spiked ball that can only be defeated by destroying the floor beneath him and knocking him into the lava below.

Tap-Tap the Golden

Tap-Tap the Golden appears in King Bowser's Castle and chases Yoshi through an autoscrolling sequence. Although this encounter features the Boss Battle theme, Tap-Tap the Golden can't actually be defeated. Yoshi's only option is to run!

Baby Bowser

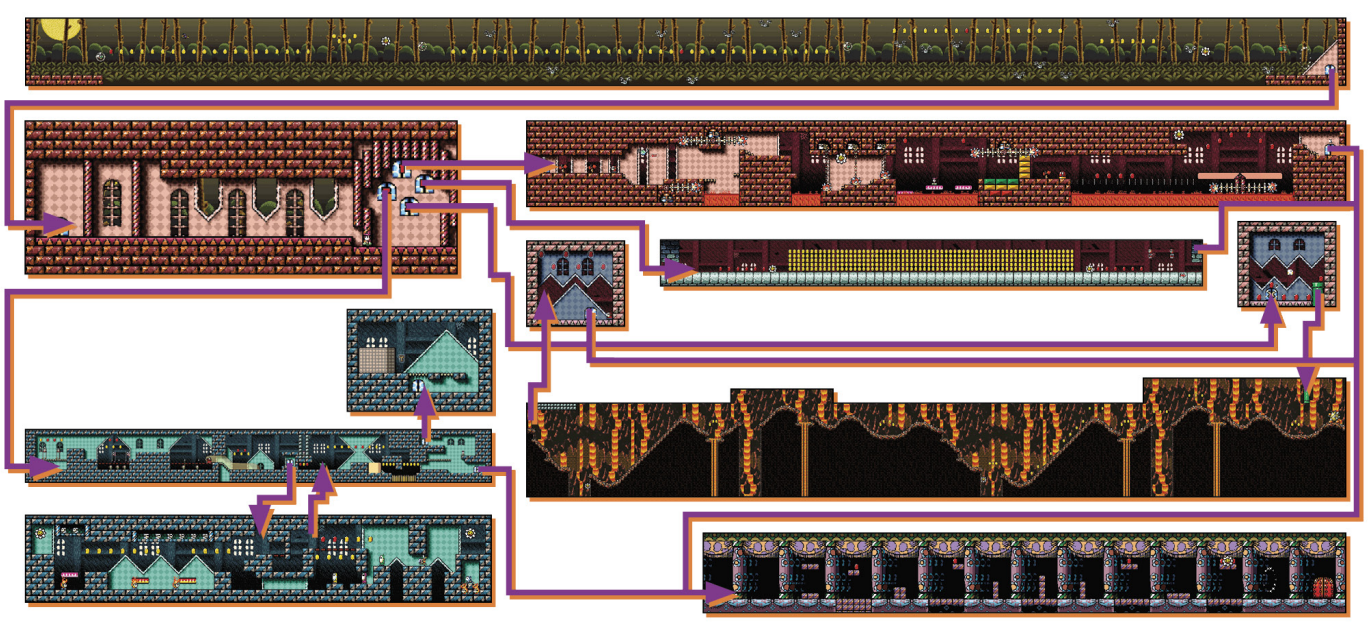
Turns out "King Bowser" comes in baby form as well. Yoshi and Baby Bowser have a stomp-off, attempting to damage each other with shockwaves from their ground pounds. After Yoshi wins the duel, Kamek uses his magic to enlarge one last boss for Yoshi to face…

Baby Bowser

As with Raphael the Raven, the final boss music signals a different kind of encounter. A kaiju-sized Baby Bowser rises up menacingly from the horizon, then slowly charges toward the foreground, eventually filling the entire screen if he gets too close. Yoshi must precisely aim Giant Eggs so that they arc over a great distance, otherwise they'll miss their target. Interestingly, Bowser's next appearance was *Super Mario 64*, where he appears fully grown and roughly the same size as Big Baby Bowser.

The dev team put a lot of effort and imagination into the boss battles of *Yoshi's Island*, and urged players at the time of its release to see the game through to completion. Those who did were rewarded with one of the most extraordinary final bosses in a series filled with memorable moments.

Featured Stage: 6-8: King Bowser's Castle



1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

All of the Yoshis are featured on the Super Famicom box, unlike the Super NES art that pits Green Yoshi and Baby Mario against the Nep-Enut enemy.

2 999 YOSHIS ON THE WALL

This glitch, sometimes known as "Zombie Yoshi," involves Yoshi pressing a red switch in level 6-8 at the same time he is killed by lava. The death animation is canceled and Yoshi returns to life, but the life counter is reduced by one. If Yoshi has no extra lives left during this trick, the life counter rolls back to 999 lives!

3 YOSHI COUNTRY

Due to the success of *Donkey Kong Country*, a similar CG visual style was considered for *Yoshi's Island* before swinging the completely opposite direction. Early CG graphics can still be seen in some of the game's cinematics.

4 SCRAPPED CONCEPT

Yoshi's Island was in development for five years. The first two years were spent experimenting with different ideas, including a concept that would have seen Yoshi guiding Baby Mario through stages instead of giving him a ride.

5 CAVE CRITTERS

World 3-6: The Cave of Harry Hedgehog is filled with cute spiny blue rodents. It's hard to say what this might be a reference to, if anything.

6 UNUSED ENEMIES

These enemy variants were left unused in *Yoshi's Island*, including a larger version of the Grinder monkeys, complete with a red tie and barrels to throw. The unused red Bullet Bill appeared later in the Game Boy Advance port.

7 MILDE

The smirking Milde's spherical pink appearance and stylish red shoes look suspiciously close to a certain other Nintendo character.

8 IT'S A ZOO OUT THERE

As noted in the *Super Mario World* chapter of this book, the ability to eat dolphins was removed from that game's original international releases. In *Yoshi's Island*, however, all bets are off! Yoshi can eat seagulls, ghosts, monkeys—there's even a stage called "What's Gusty Taste Like?" Not to mention that all those devoured Shy Guys probably had feelings, and families. Oh dear, do Shy Guys have families?!!

9 EATING BABY MARIO

There is a horrifying glitch that allows Yoshi to eat Baby Mario and turn him into an Egg! It's fairly simple to pull off, too. First you need to...Ah, um. Actually, you know what? Forget we mentioned it...

10 BABY FEVER!

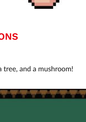
The *Mario Kart* series is a regular baby factory! Baby Mario, Baby Luigi, and Baby Peach were eventually joined by Baby Daisy and Baby Rosalina.

11 BABY PARK

Mario Kart: Double Dash!! also introduced the Baby Park race course, which is, fittingly, the shortest course in the entire series. The track is filled with *Yoshi's Island* references, including Baby Bowser, Kamek's Magic Show, a Yoshi Train, and Yoshi Helicopter!

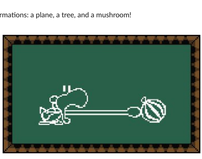
12 YOSSY

In the extra bonus stage of World 6, Yoshi's name is spelled out as part of the track for the flatbed ferries that carry Yoshi through the room. However, in Japanese, Yoshi was sometimes Romanized as Yossy, and so the levels are different in both versions.



13 UNUSED TRANSFORMATIONS

Yoshi has three unused transformations: a plane, a tree, and a mushroom!



14 UNUSED ART

Also left behind in the game code are various pieces of art from the tutorial pop-ups.

15 THE END OF AN ERA

Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island was the last 2D game in the main *Super Mario* series to be released for home consoles until *New Super Mario Bros. Wii* nearly 15 years later.

16 BABY STACHE

Nintendo EAD originally envisioned Super Baby Mario transforming into a fully grown, mustachioed man. The potential time paradox was pointed out by another staff member and so the idea was scrapped. But that leaves so many unanswered questions! Would Super Baby Adult Mario still be wearing the diaper?!

Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

Confidential Information

Video is restricted

Speedrunner Kolthor the Barbarian

World Records Held: Any% Warpless (1H 42M 57S)

Yoshi's Island can be enjoyed immensely by both casual and hardcore players. This is key to its popularity as a speedrunning challenge, says Kolthor the Barbarian, the current world record-holder for the Any% Warpless category. "You don't want to spend countless hours playing a game you hate. The aesthetics of the game still hold up to today's standards due to its unique storybook graphic style."

That doesn't mean *Yoshi's Island* is easy to master. Quite the opposite, as a single world record run can take anywhere from an hour and 45 minutes, to over two and a half hours for the 100% category, which requires all 30 Stars, 20 Red Coins, and five Flowers to be obtained on every level in the game. Or you could try learning the Credits Warp, in which case *Yoshi's Island* can be beaten in less than three minutes.

There are many crowd-pleasing techniques used to shed time in *Yoshi's Island*, so many that longtime *Yoshi's Island* speedrunner Trihex coined the term "swag." Swag has since become a community-wide colloquialism for anything in any game that puts on a show, even at the risk of a good run. "As we say in the speedrun community," explains Kolthor, "'If it saves time, it's not swag.'"

The length, popularity, and immense amount of skill required to competitively speedrun *Yoshi's Island* makes it an extremely prestigious accomplishment. "From asking around," says Kolthor, "many said *Yoshi* was one of the most difficult speedruns out there, and a world record in *Yoshi's Island* is considered by many in the entire speedrun community to be a heavily sought-after title."

"The controls for the game are some of the best you will ever find in a platformer," Kolthor says. "Every movement you do feels fluid and natural. There is also very little random chance involved in *Yoshi's Island*. I like the feeling that every success and failure is in my control. *Yoshi's Island* is, in my opinion, the pinnacle of what a speedrun game should be."

Basic

Quick Movement

When you need to turn around or come to a stop, the fastest way is to either tongue a wall or ceiling, or if no wall is available, press Down briefly.

Never Run on Slopes

Running on slopes increases the distance Yoshi needs to cover, so always jump over hills or slopes.

Ledges

Running off a ledge causes Yoshi to fall at max speed. Thus, the quickest way to fall down from an area is not to jump like in other games, but to simply run off the edge.

Tonguing Effectively

Normally using Yoshi's tongue causes him to slow down, but this can be avoided by doing two things. Always tongue in mid-air and let go of the D-pad after starting the tongue action.

Making Eggs Effectively

Yoshi loses all forward movement when making Eggs while standing on the ground. Whenever possible, make your Eggs while in mid-air.

To do this effectively, do the following: 1) Tongue an enemy; 2) While traveling at max speed, jump; 3) As quickly as possible after jumping, remove your thumb from forward, and tap Down for as little time as possible; 4) Continue holding Jump so that you do not land until the Egg swallowing animation is finished (you should not be pushing any directional buttons at all); 5) Return your thumb to pushing Down forward when the Egg animation ends. It may sound complicated at first, but with a little practice, the whole motion will become smooth and natural.

Lag Reduction

Certain areas of the game naturally have a lot of assets on-screen and can cause the game to slow down. To help reduce or prevent this, shoot some Eggs to reduce your Egg count and thereby also reduce the number of sprites on-screen.

Item Clipping

Many levels have items that are completely walled off, and appear to be out of reach. However, Yoshi's tongue can pass through walls. If the item is directly above Yoshi, hold Up, press Y, and then jump shortly after. The trick can initially take a bit of practice. A major skip can be done in 6-6 using this, resulting in getting the level's first Key early.

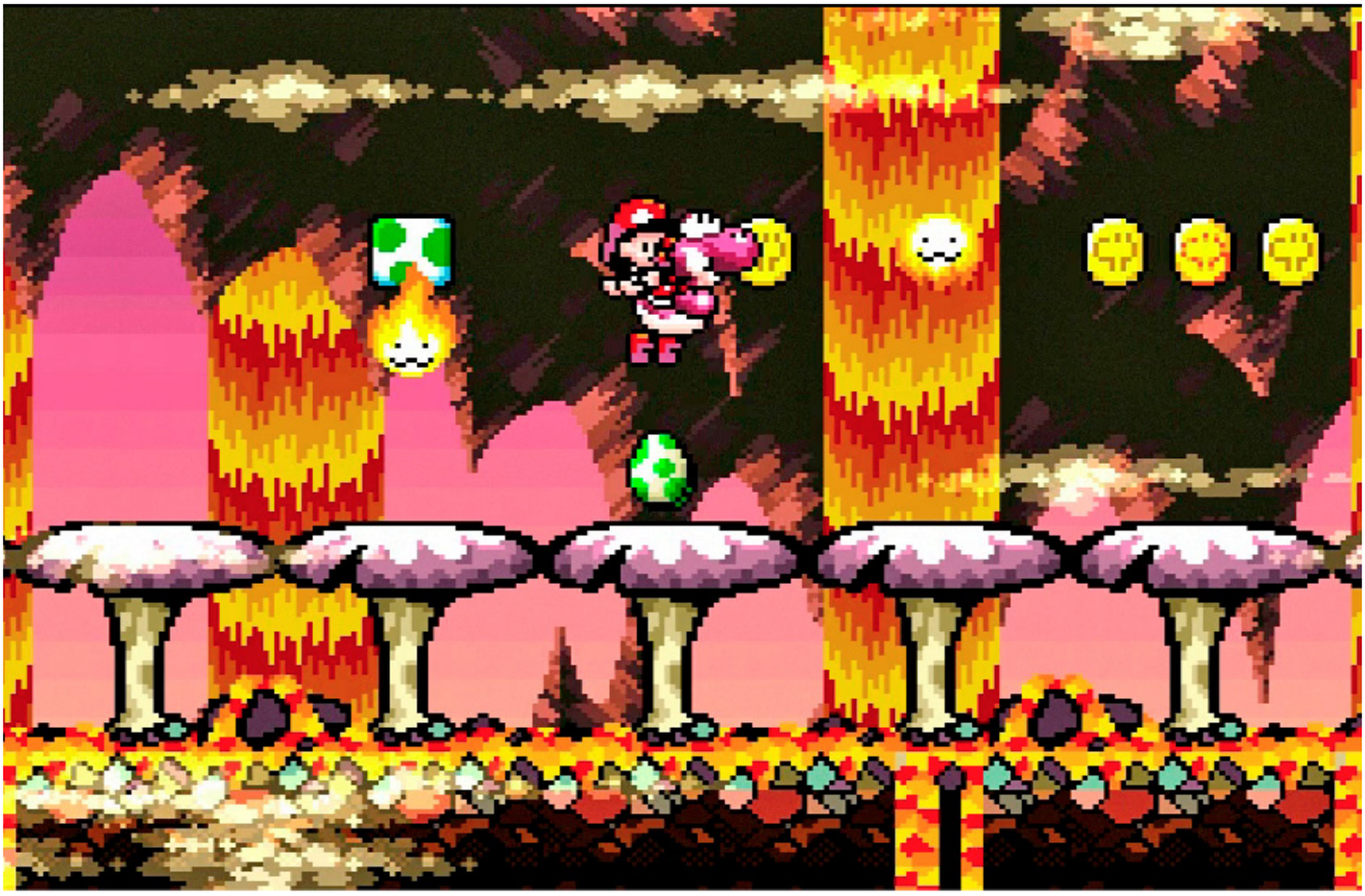
Quick Goal

Whenever you enter a goal ring, always try to enter at the bottom of the ring. Hitting the bottom of the goal ring saves a small amount of time (one to ten frames) over hitting the middle or top of the ring. This is due to Mario being caught by the next Yoshi sooner. The difference between the very bottom and peak height of a jump is 10 frames.

Advanced

Perfect Jumps

Perfect jumps are performed by jumping on the first frame possible as Yoshi is landing on the ground. These jumps produce several interesting effects, most notably because the game does not seem to register Yoshi as having landed on the ground at all if a perfect jump is performed. This is often used in conjunction with an extended flutter: whenever Yoshi bounces on an enemy, he gets a much longer and higher flutter that can be used to reach high areas. However, the flutter must be initiated before landing or else it is canceled, i.e. you must use an extended flutter immediately after bouncing on an enemy. This cancellation can be avoided by using a perfect jump, as the game never registers Yoshi as having touched the ground.



Perfect Flutter

Normally, a flutter is done simply by pushing Jump and holding it down until a flutter begins. This produces a flutter which both comes out later, and does not give Yoshi optimal height. If Jump is manually released right as Yoshi begins to fall, and then very quickly re-pressed (one to three frames later), Yoshi performs a flutter, which travels a bit higher up. This trick is used to access several locations otherwise too high for Yoshi to jump to naturally.

Pipe Glitch

While standing on a pipe that can be entered from above, press Down on the D-pad and Jump simultaneously. Yoshi jumps in the air and enters the pipe at the same time. Doing this skips the animation you would normally see when entering a pipe and saves about .5 seconds. This glitch is also used in some places to activate a 1-1 Warp.

Gate HackThere are many one-way gates in *Yoshi's Island* that can actually be opened backward by several methods. By far the easiest real-time method for opening a gate from behind is to throw a straight upward-aimed Egg at just the right spot toward the top of the gate. The Egg glitches into the gate, and knocks it open, thus allowing Yoshi to go through an otherwise closed gate. This is used to save time in 2-4 Any%, skipping the staircase that is typically used in that area.

Piranha Skip

After shooting an Egg or spitting an enemy onto a Green Piranha Plant, it is possible to travel through them for 32 frames (about half a second) without taking a hit.

Red Coin Duplication

It is possible to duplicate Red Coins carried by Patrolling Fly Guys. You do this by tonguing the Fly Guy, not picking up the Red Coin, going off-screen and spitting it out without killing it, and going back to respawn the Fly Guy.

Expert

Sprite Overload

You cannot load more than 24 sprites on the screen at once. Keep in mind that some sprite slots are reserved for important stuff such as Baby Mario, Toadies, etc. For speedrunning, this mechanic has both pros and cons. It can be abused to despawn almost anything such as enemies, Save Rings, and gates to save time. Most notable is the Bullet Bill Launcher despawn in 2-7.

Chicken Baxter

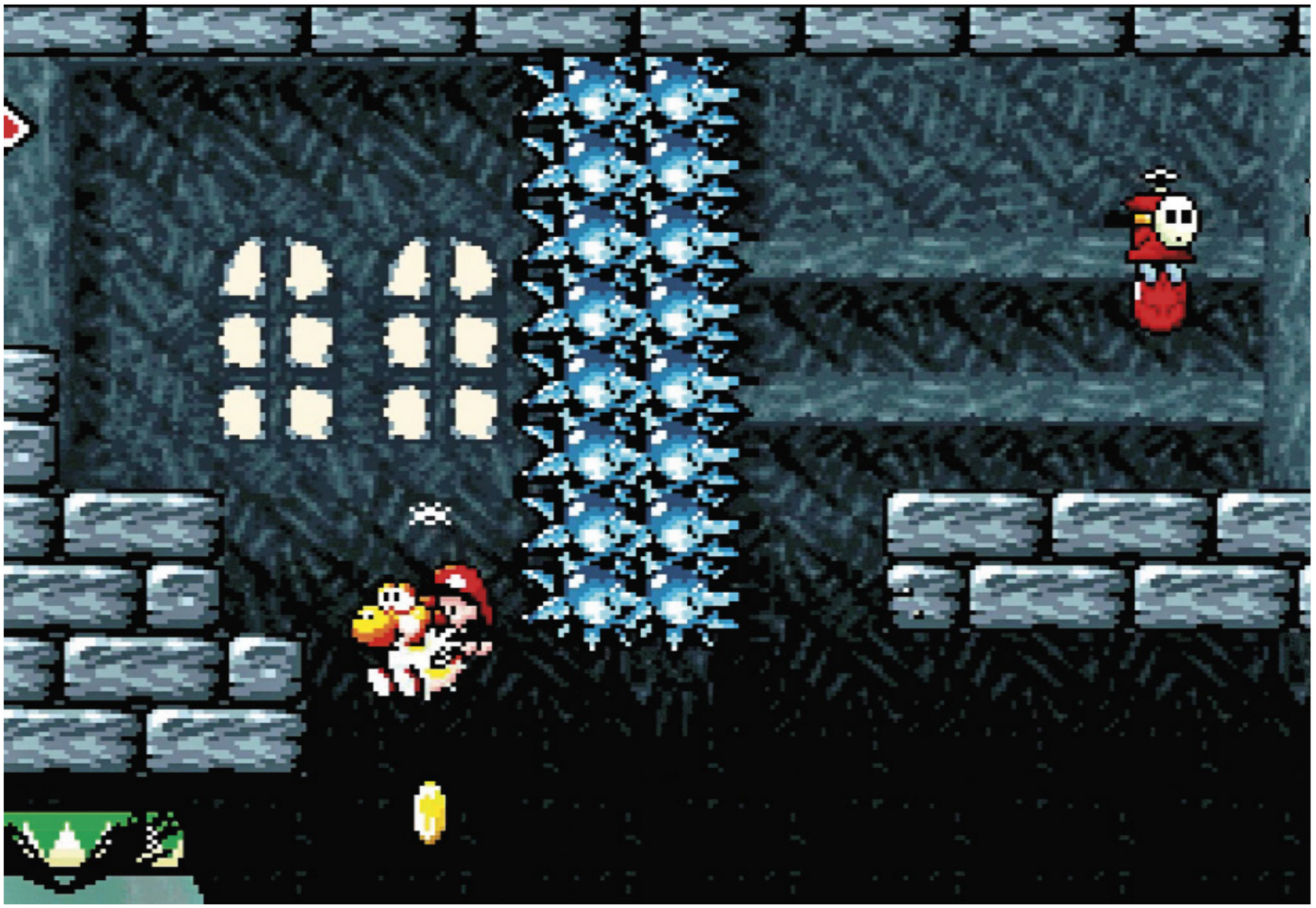
The 4-7 Chicken Baxter is a way to bring a chicken (Huffin' Puffin) to 4-8, which can be used against Hookbill to flip him over instantly. A Chicken Baxter is performed by aiming the chicken and canceling the aim at the same frame as you enter a goal ring. However, a certain setup is needed to make it work, along with a deep understanding of how sprite IDs behave in *Yoshi's Island*.

1-1 Warping

The glitch is performed in different ways depending on which level you are in. Each glitch follows the same general format, though. The area that Yoshi warps to when he goes through a pipe is dependent on where Yoshi actually is when the screen transition is triggered, and not which pipe he goes down. Thus, entering a pipe from a different position than usual can result in the game not knowing where to send Yoshi. This causes him to be sent to coordinates (0,0)—the top left corner—of the default level (1-1). You can trigger a 1-1 Warp by performing a Pipe Glitch on the first pipe you can enter in 1-1.

ACE (Arbitrary Code Execution)

To perform the credits warp, a glitch called “Tongue Glitch” is used. This causes Yoshi’s tongue to stretch infinitely, eating up the game’s memory. If manipulated correctly, the Tongue Glitch can cause the game to execute instructions from the memory addresses associated with the positions of recently spawned sprites. This is great, because sprite positions can be manipulated. By positioning various sprites at subpixel perfect locations, a sequence of instructions is used to run the credits. This run was made possible by the work of ArneTheGreat.



5-4 Skip

This “skip,” as we call it, is a combination of a few techniques performed in 5-4 that allows a player to avoid riding the platform ghost toward the end of the stage. This is possible because of the mechanic that doing a perfect flutter can prevent you from losing height on flutters. Each perfect flutter has a three-frame window to release and re-press the Jump button, and while there are variations on how to perform the 5-4 skip, you have to perform about 30 perfect flutters in order to successfully do it. You start off by riding the platform ghost to the first platform, then you jump off as soon as you can and begin fluttering to the right. Keep going until you pass four bats on the ceiling. You then turn around and get the bats to come to you toward the bottom of the screen. You then use the bats to jump on and help you navigate the rest of the skip. This is by far the HARDEST thing I have ever had to do in a video game. It took me approximately 700 attempts before I was able to do it for the first time. It is worth it, though, as it saves about one minute and 20 seconds.

The *Super Mario World* moniker was attached to the American and European release of *Yoshi's Island* to tie it directly with the uber-successful original. Like its predecessor, *Yoshi's Island* was bundled with the system, this time the redesigned New-Style Super NES option.

Future *Yoshi's Island*-style games would be split off into their own series, throughout which the 16-bit classic's influence is readily apparent.

Yoshi's Story

1997, Nintendo 64

The canonical sequel to *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island*, Yoshi's sole Nintendo 64 outing stayed true to his two-dimensional platforming roots, rather than going fully 3D as Mario did. It does, however, feature pre-rendered 3D visuals a la *Donkey Kong Country*, as Nintendo had originally envisioned for the game. Hideki Konno, game director of *Yoshi's Island*, also directed *Yoshi's Story*. This was the last home console Yoshi game until *Yoshi's Woolly World* in 2015.

Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3

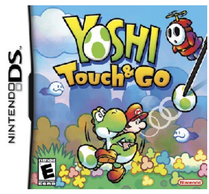
2002, Game Boy Advance

Like with all previous *Super Mario* games, the Game Boy Advance received a handheld port of *Yoshi's Island*. Numerous small tweaks and adjustments were made, with the most notable change being the addition of six new secret levels, bringing the grand total to 60 levels.

Yoshi Topsy-Turvy

2004, Game Boy Advance

Otherwise known as *Yoshi's Universal Gravitation* in Japan, Australia, and Europe, *Yoshi Topsy-Turvy* used a built-in gyroscopic sensor similar to *Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble* and *WarioWare: Twisted*. Tilting the Game Boy Advance shifts enemies and objects around, allowing Yoshi to solve puzzles and overcome platforming sequences.



Yoshi Touch & Go

2005, Nintendo DS

Catch! Touch! Yoshi! as it was released in Japan, focused on the Nintendo DS's touchscreen to create clouds that guide Yoshi and Baby Mario on their journey. The game was originally planned as a Nintendo GameCube game called *Balloon Trip*.

Yoshi's Island DS

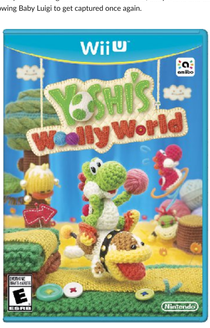
2006, Nintendo DS

Originally announced as *Yoshi's Island 2*, *Yoshi's Island DS* followed very closely in the original game's footsteps, both visually and mechanically. New additions included Baby Wario, Baby Peach, Baby Donkey Kong, and Baby Bowser as playable characters.

Yoshi's New Island

2014, Nintendo 3DS

The first new Yoshi game in nearly a decade, *Yoshi's New Island* is placed chronologically between *Yoshi's Island* and *Yoshi's Island DS*, making it another Yoshi pre-sequel. Following the events of *Yoshi's Island*, Baby Mario and Baby Luigi are delivered by the stork to the wrong parents, allowing Baby Luigi to get captured once again.



Yoshi's Woolly World

2015, Wii U

From the developers of *Kirby's Epic Yarn*, *Yoshi's Woolly World* is both fresh and familiar. Building off the excellent gameplay foundation established 20 years prior in *Yoshi's Island*, Good-Feel overhauled the visuals from the long-running Crayola art style to one based in fabrics and knitting materials. Perhaps most importantly, however, Yoshi finally received his long-lost plane transformation.

A Nintendo 3DS port titled *Poochy & Yoshi's Woolly World* was released in 2017.

Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island Credits

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HAL Laboratory, Nintendo EAD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: September 21, 1994

NA: February 1, 1995

EU: August 24, 1995

Once upon a time, on a little star, there was a small, peaceful country called Dream Land. The Dream Spring incident was over and the inhabitants of Dream Land returned to their normal, peaceful lives. Every day, they would eat delicious meals and take wonderful afternoon naps. There was no need to worry about anything since everything was so peaceful.

At night, everyone slept soundly as thousands of stars lit the sky and quietly stood watch over Dream Land. The stars, known for their beauty, became the pride and joy of everyone in Dream Land.

One night, the inhabitants said to one another, "Let's gaze at the star-lit sky and have wonderful dreams tonight." However, when they gazed up into the sky they noticed something was different. The sky was black. There wasn't a single star in sight! The next morning, they were very worried. Everyone became upset and asked each other "What happened to the stars?" "Will we ever see them again?" Then, someone said, "Don't worry! Surely, the sky will be full of stars again!" However, the stars did not return that night, or the night after. Everyone in Dream Land became very sad.

How many nights have passed since they last saw the beautiful, star-lit sky? Every night, all they saw was the pitch black sky and no stars. Everyone was in a state of shock. They were so worried that they gradually stopped eating their delicious meals and no longer enjoyed having dreams. Their spirits were sinking fast. Eventually, laughter ceased in Dream Land, and everyone stopped smiling.

Another dark, gloomy night loomed over Dream Land. All sorts of rumors had been spreading, and everyone was saying, "It looks like King Dedede is behind this." "I bet he's hogging all those beautiful stars for himself!" Could it be that King Dedede is indeed responsible for the missing stars?

If it's true, there's only one hero that can save the stars. Yes, that young hero is Kirby. He comes in with the spring breeze and saves Dream Land in times of crisis.

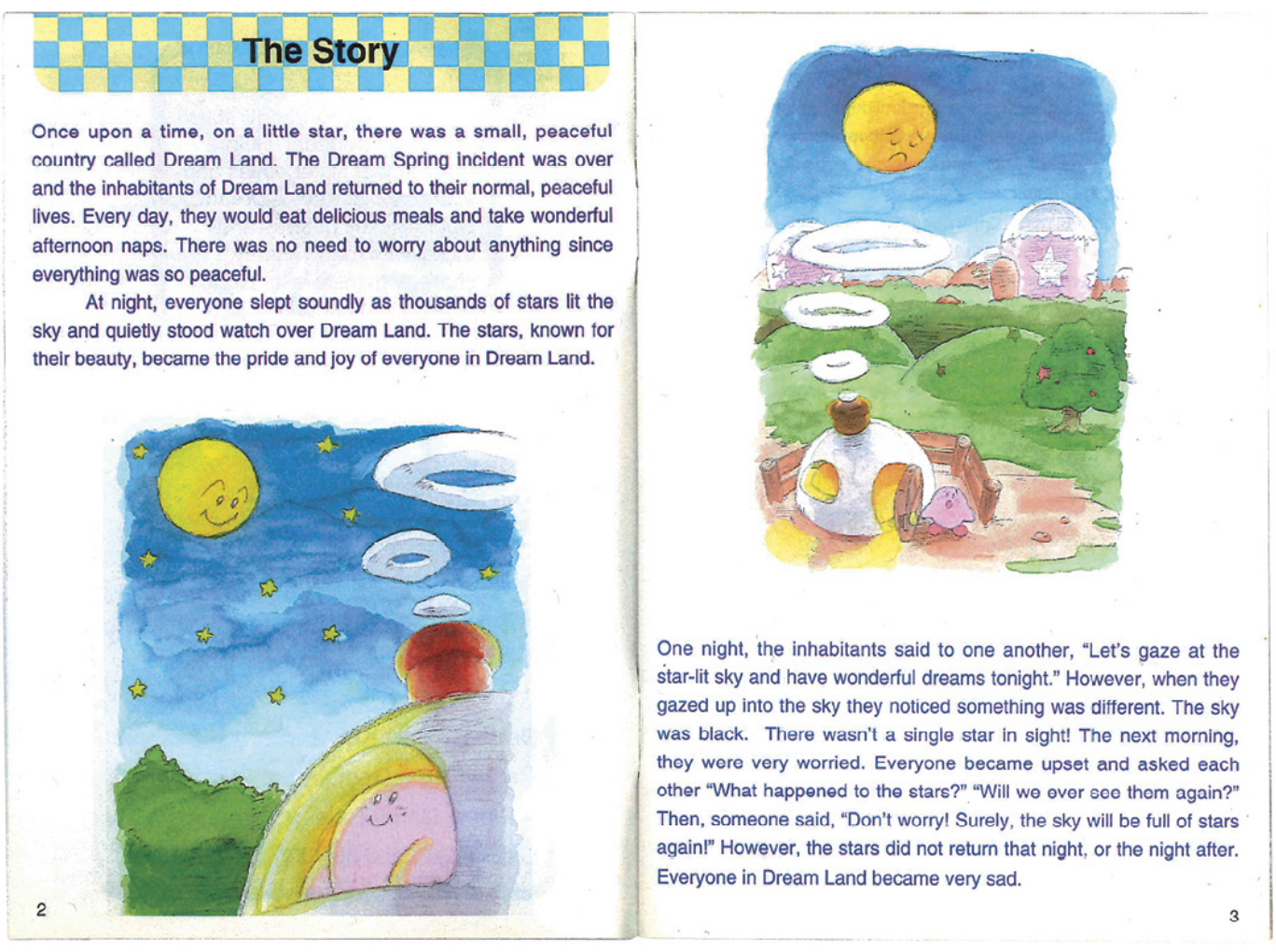
Kirby sets out for his long adventure to punish King Dedede once again and take back the stolen stars. Kirby heads for King Dedede's floating castle. The king has set up many traps in his castle. His servants each have a star and they wait for Kirby's arrival at the castle.

This adventure is full of new and amazing challenges. Good luck, Kirby!

Development

Although *Kirby Super Star* is one of the most memorable Kirby titles ever made, it wasn't the vacuum-powered anthropomorphic alien balloon's SNES debut. That honor belongs to *Kirby's Dream Course*, an imaginative and surprisingly sophisticated mini-golf game.

Developed by HAL Laboratory in tandem with *EarthBound*, *Kirby's Dream Course* originated as a Kirby-less game called *Special Tee Shot*. *Special Tee Shot* was officially advertised before being retooled as a Kirby title, though the original game did eventually see release several years later exclusively via the Super Famicom's Satellaview broadcast service.



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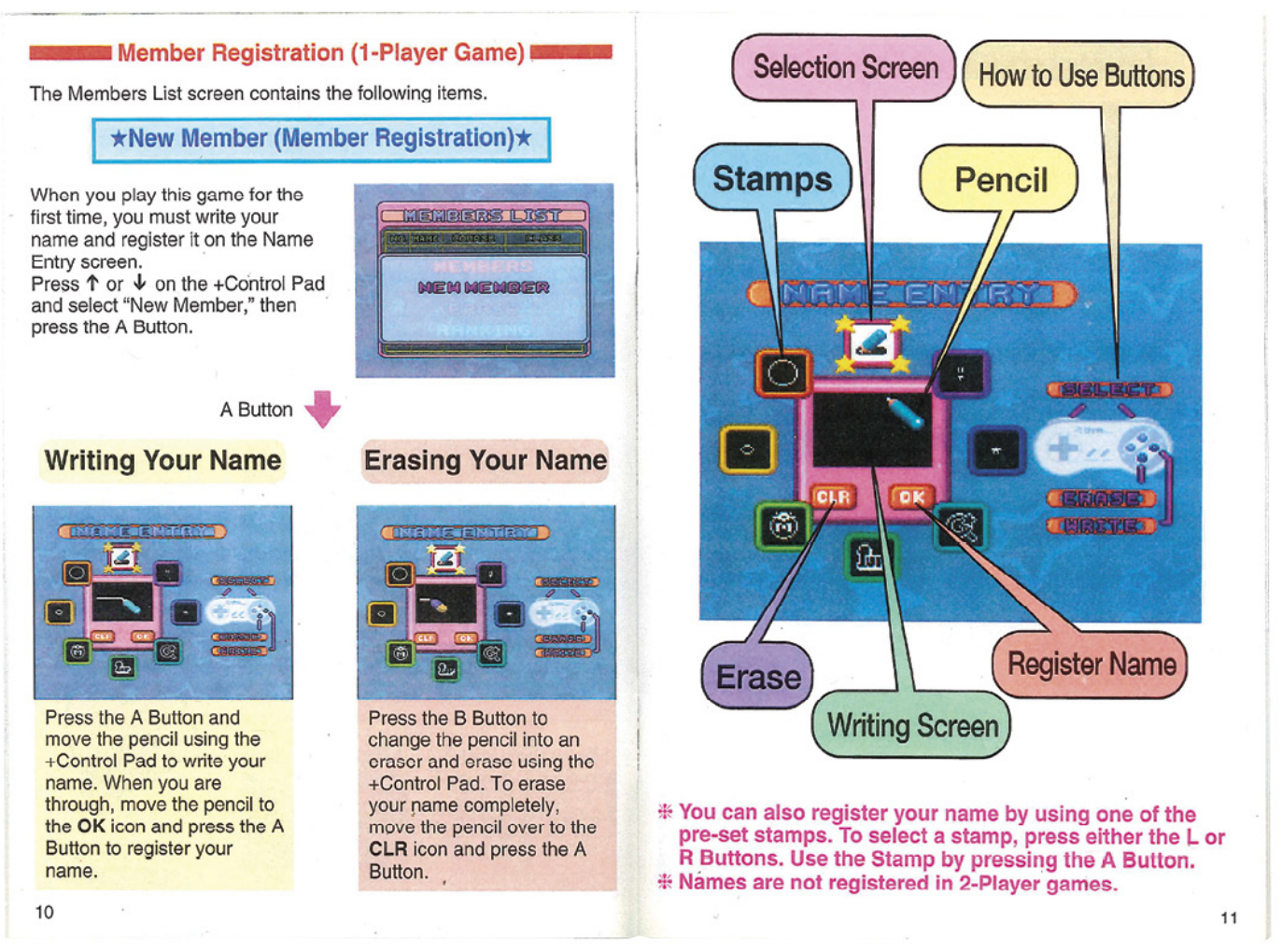

Member Registration (1-Player Game)

The Members List screen contains the following items.

★New Member (Member Registration)★

When you play this game for the first time, you must write your name and register it on the Name Entry screen.
Press ↑ or ↓ on the +Control Pad and select "New Member," then press the A Button.

A Button

Writing Your Name

Press the A Button and move the pencil using the +Control Pad to write your name. When you are through, move the pencil to the **OK** icon and press the A Button to register your name.

Erasing Your Name

Press the B Button to change the pencil into an eraser and erase using the +Control Pad. To erase your name completely, move the pencil over to the **CLR** icon and press the A Button.

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Selection Screen
How to Use Buttons
Stamps
Pencil
Erase
Register Name
Writing Screen

* You can also register your name by using one of the pre-set stamps. To select a stamp, press either the L or R Buttons. Use the Stamp by pressing the A Button.
* Names are not registered in 2-Player games.

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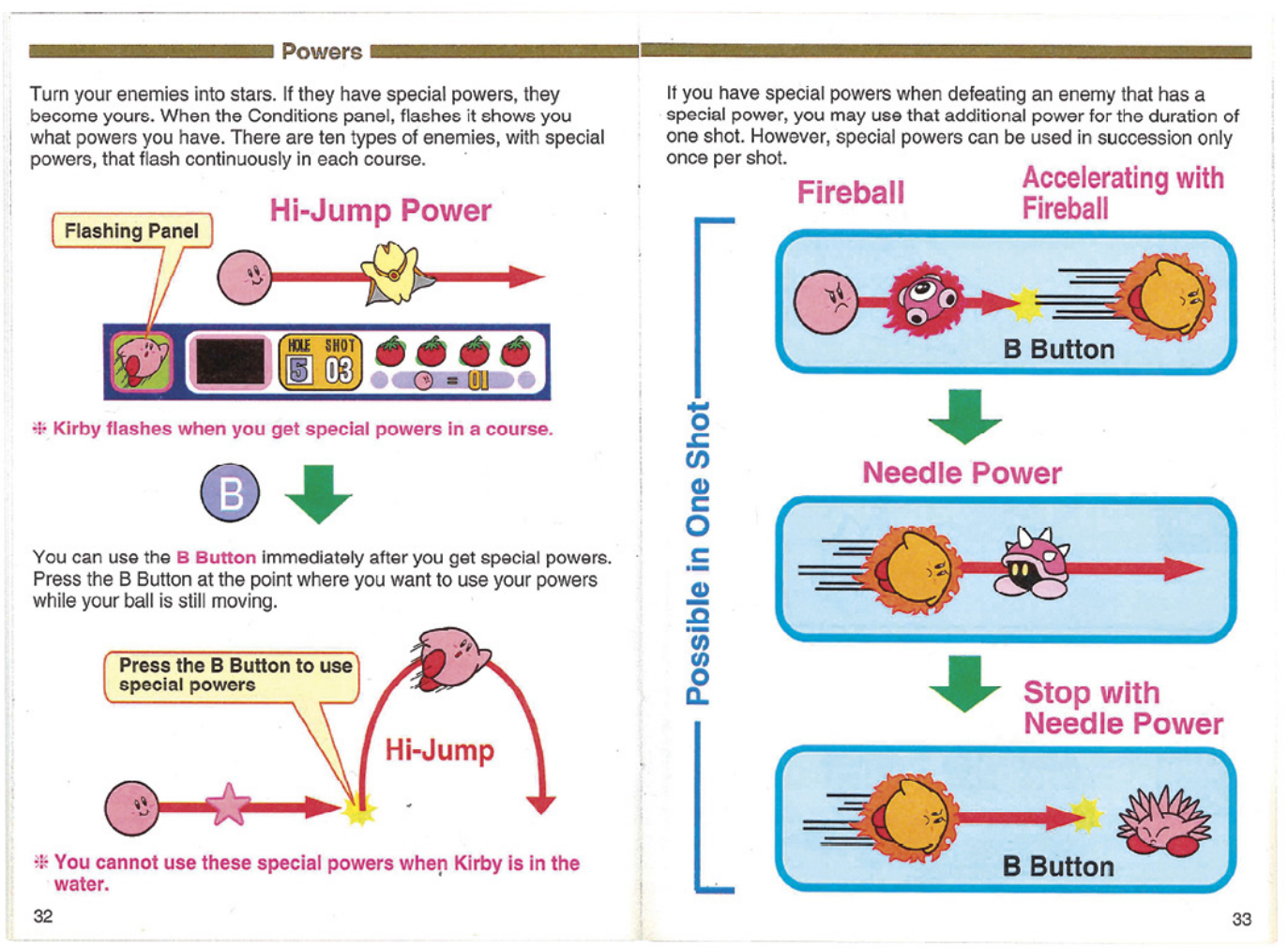
The storied development is likely the reason *Kirby's Dream Course* is one of the most challenging and technical games in the entire *Kirby* series, which has historically skewed toward accessibility and relative simplicity. This design philosophy was perhaps best demonstrated in 2010's *Kirby's Epic Yarn*, which was unanimously hailed as being notably easy, yet remarkably enjoyable and rewarding. *Kirby's Dream Course*, on the other hand, still defies domination to this day, with only a small handful of extraordinarily devoted players laboring to contend with its intricate mechanics and more demanding courses.

On the surface, *Kirby's Dream Course* fused the mini-golf formula with Kirby's patented, lively visuals. Each hole takes place on an isometric, pseudo-3D checkerboard, complete with obstacles and enemies lifted from the Kirby-verse. The goal of the game is to set up shots in a way that Kirby collides with each enemy. The final remaining enemy then turns into the "cup," and when Kirby enters the cup the hole is complete. This rule alone greatly expands the possible methods a player can use to finish any hole in the game.

But it wouldn't be a Kirby game without Copy Abilities, and *Kirby's Dream Course* further augments the potential strategies for each hole with an assortment of familiar powers obtained from certain enemies. For players looking to complete each of the game's courses in as few shots as possible, the secret is chaining abilities together so that a single shot can carry Kirby all around the map, hopefully ending triumphantly in the cup.



Powers

Turn your enemies into stars. If they have special powers, they become yours. When the Conditions panel, flashes it shows you what powers you have. There are ten types of enemies, with special powers, that flash continuously in each course.

Hi-Jump Power
Flashing Panel

* Kirby flashes when you get special powers in a course.

B

You can use the **B Button** immediately after you get special powers. Press the B Button at the point where you want to use your powers while your ball is still moving.

Press the B Button to use special powers
Hi-Jump

* You cannot use these special powers when Kirby is in the water.

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If you have special powers when defeating an enemy that has a special power, you may use that additional power for the duration of one shot. However, special powers can be used in succession only once per shot.

Possible in One Shot

Fireball
Accelerating with Fireball
B Button
Needle Power
Stop with Needle Power
B Button

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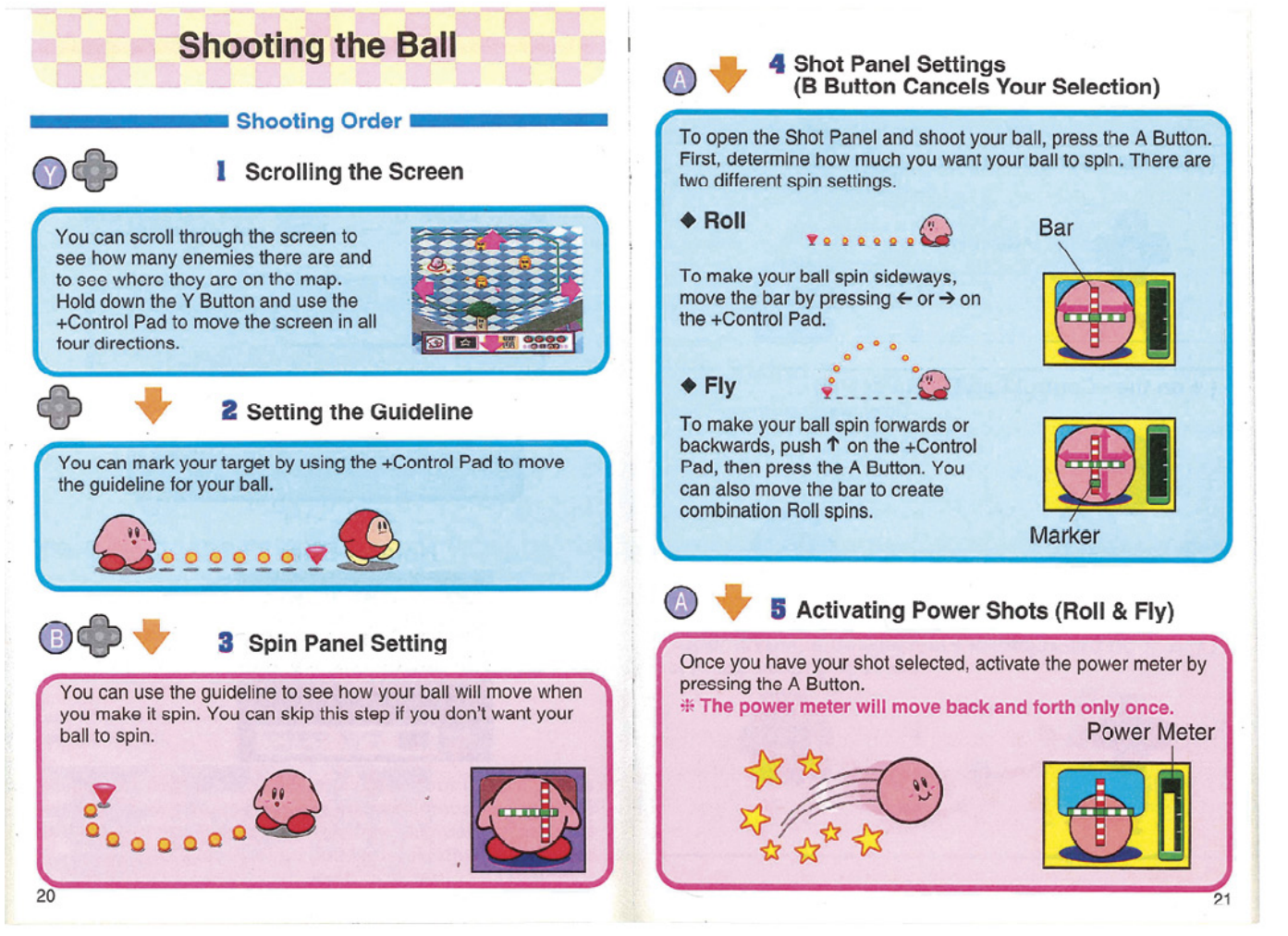

Shooting the Ball

Shooting Order

1 Scrolling the Screen

You can scroll through the screen to see how many enemies there are and to see where they are on the map. Hold down the Y Button and use the +Control Pad to move the screen in all four directions.

2 Setting the Guideline

You can mark your target by using the +Control Pad to move the guideline for your ball.

3 Spin Panel Setting

You can use the guideline to see how your ball will move when you make it spin. You can skip this step if you don't want your ball to spin.

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4 Shot Panel Settings (B Button Cancels Your Selection)

To open the Shot Panel and shoot your ball, press the A Button. First, determine how much you want your ball to spin. There are two different spin settings.

◆ **Roll**

To make your ball spin sideways, move the bar by pressing ← or → on the +Control Pad.

Bar

◆ **Fly**

To make your ball spin forwards or backwards, push ↑ on the +Control Pad, then press the A Button. You can also move the bar to create combination Roll spins.

Marker

5 Activating Power Shots (Roll & Fly)

Once you have your shot selected, activate the power meter by pressing the A Button.
* The power meter will move back and forth only once.

Power Meter

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On their own, these mechanics aren't particularly daunting. However, *Kirby's Dream Course* includes a very robust shot system similar to Nintendo's *Golf* for the NES, which was the first golf game to feature a power gauge for aiming. Players can not only perform a variety of trick shots such as top spins and back spins, skipping Kirby over bodies of water and banking Kirby off the environment, but once a shot has been taken, Kirby's movement can be "boosted" to extend farther or bounce higher by timing precise button presses. It's all incredibly in-depth, and requires exponentially more skill and cunning as the holes become larger and more intricate.

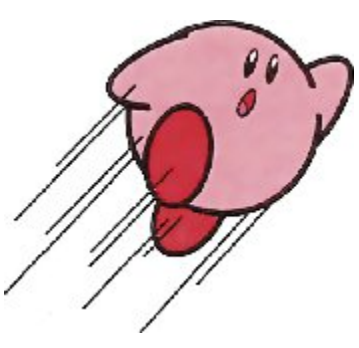
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Kirby's Dream Course

Abilities

Flashing enemies have special powers. When Kirby touches them he absorbs their power. Collecting a new power overwrites an existing power. However, when hitting multiple enemies in the same stroke, it's possible to chain powers together. This is the key to getting hole-in-ones.

Hi-Jump



This lets Kirby jump even higher.

Parasol

This lets you control how fast Kirby falls using the +Control Pad. The parasol acts as a brake to slow down Kirby's fall.

Spark

With Spark, Kirby can destroy Whispy and Kracko.

Wheel

This lets Kirby turn into a wheel and pick up instantaneous speed to whiz over bunkers and areas covered with water. If Kirby rams into a bumper, he flies straight up and comes to a full stop.

Stone

This lets Kirby turn into a rock and immediately come to a full stop. If you use the power on a sloped surface, Kirby falls down the slope.

Freeze

This lets you freeze the surface of the water, allowing Kirby to slide over it.

Tornado

This lets you turn Kirby into a tornado. Press a or d on the +Control Pad to change his direction as he moves.

Needle

Using Needle will make Kirby come to a full stop even on a slope. Remember to make adjustments when Kirby is moving at a fast speed.

Fireball

This lets Kirby turn into a fireball, making him accelerate quickly. Kirby can move a greater distance for a pre-set period of time. If Kirby hits a bumper, he bounces back.

U.F.O. (Limit: 10 seconds)

This lets you turn Kirby into a U.F.O. With this, he can fly at a constant speed. You can make Kirby move at right angles by pressing a or d on the +Control Pad. If Kirby rams into a bumper, he can no longer use this power.

Kirby's Dream Course

Demo Play

Selecting this option from the main menu lets the player view a series of tutorial sequences demonstrating the various abilities and techniques in the game. Definitely worth checking out if it's your first time!

Kirby's Dream Course

Traps & Tricks

Kick Panel

Sends Kirby rolling in the direction of the arrow.

Dash Panel

Similar to a Kick Panel, except Kirby will accelerate coming off the panel.

Warp Panel

Transports Kirby to the corresponding Warp Panel. Warp Panels with arrows change Kirby's trajectory, whereas Warp Panels without arrows spit him out the same direction he came in.

Turntables

Rotating panels that roll Kirby in various directions. Turntables can be switched on and off.

Conveyor Belt

Carries Kirby to the end of its track.

Trampolines

Kirby can bounce exceptionally high using this panel.

Air Curtains

Allows Kirby to ride the wind and float upward.

Danger Zone

A spiked pit that will cost Kirby one tomato if he falls in.

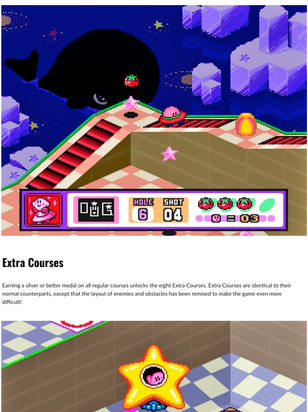
Ponds

If Kirby falls into a pond it'll be difficult to hit him out. Some holes have switches that can fill or empty ponds.

Bunkers

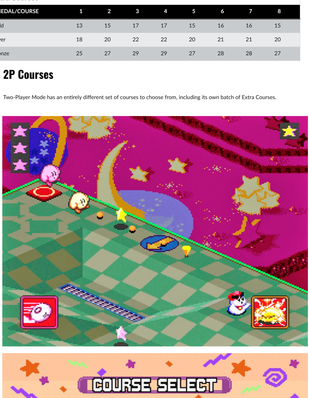
Sand-filled panels that stop Kirby from moving.

There are eight regular courses in Kirby's *Dream Course*, each with eight holes. After the 64th hole Kirby faces off against the game's sole boss, Robo Dedede.



Extra Courses

Earning a silver or better medal on all regular courses unlocks the eight Extra Courses. Extra Courses are identical to their normal counterparts, except that the layout of enemies and obstacles has been remixed to make the game even more *difficult!*



Medal Requirements

Normal Courses

MEDAL/COURSE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gold	14	14	17	17	18	16	14	18
Silver	19	19	22	22	23	21	19	23
Bronze	26	26	29	29	30	28	26	30

Extra Courses

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Gold	13	15	17	17	15	16	16	15
Silver	18	20	22	22	20	21	21	20
Bronze	25	27	29	29	27	28	28	27

2P Courses

Two-Player Mode has an entirely different set of courses to choose from, including its own batch of Extra Courses.

The Multiplayer Mode also offers a variety of handicap settings not available in single-player, as well as unique obstacles and rules. The second player uses Keeby, and players can attack each other to steal abilities, do damage, or even knock each other off the course, all in the name of getting the most stars!

SUPER NOSTALGIA

Players could get a glimpse of all eight courses courtesy of *Nintendo Power*.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Kirby's Dream Course
16 Bits

1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

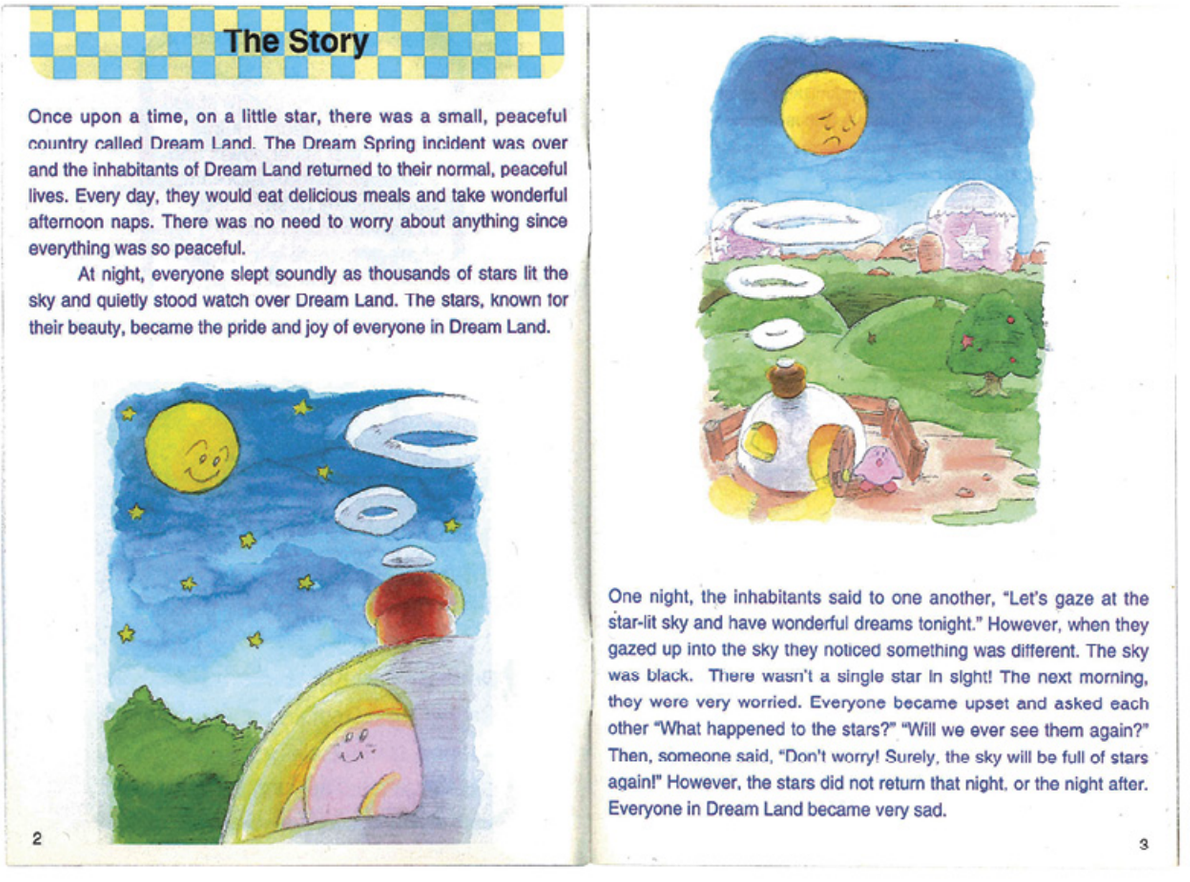
Known as *Kirby Bowl* in Japan, the game's Super Famicom box art features more enemies and more Kirbys than its less cluttered Super NES counterpart.

2 WHITE KIRBY

Though Kirby's debut game, *Kirby's Dream Land*, was released on the Game Boy (which could only depict four shades of gray), Kirby co-creator Masahiro Sakurai had always envisioned the character as pink. The same can't be said of his colleagues who had expected Kirby to be yellow or white, so much so that he was accidentally given a ghost-like hue on the box art for the North American release of *Kirby's Dream Land*.

3 STORYTIME KIRBY

Kirby's Dream Course features a fairly robust plot (for a mini-golf game, at least!). The Super Famicom version shows the story via a cinematic at the start of the game, but this was moved to the instruction manual for the US release.



The Story

Once upon a time, on a little star, there was a small, peaceful country called Dream Land. The Dream Spring incident was over and the inhabitants of Dream Land returned to their normal, peaceful lives. Every day, they would eat delicious meals and take wonderful afternoon naps. There was no need to worry about anything since everything was so peaceful.

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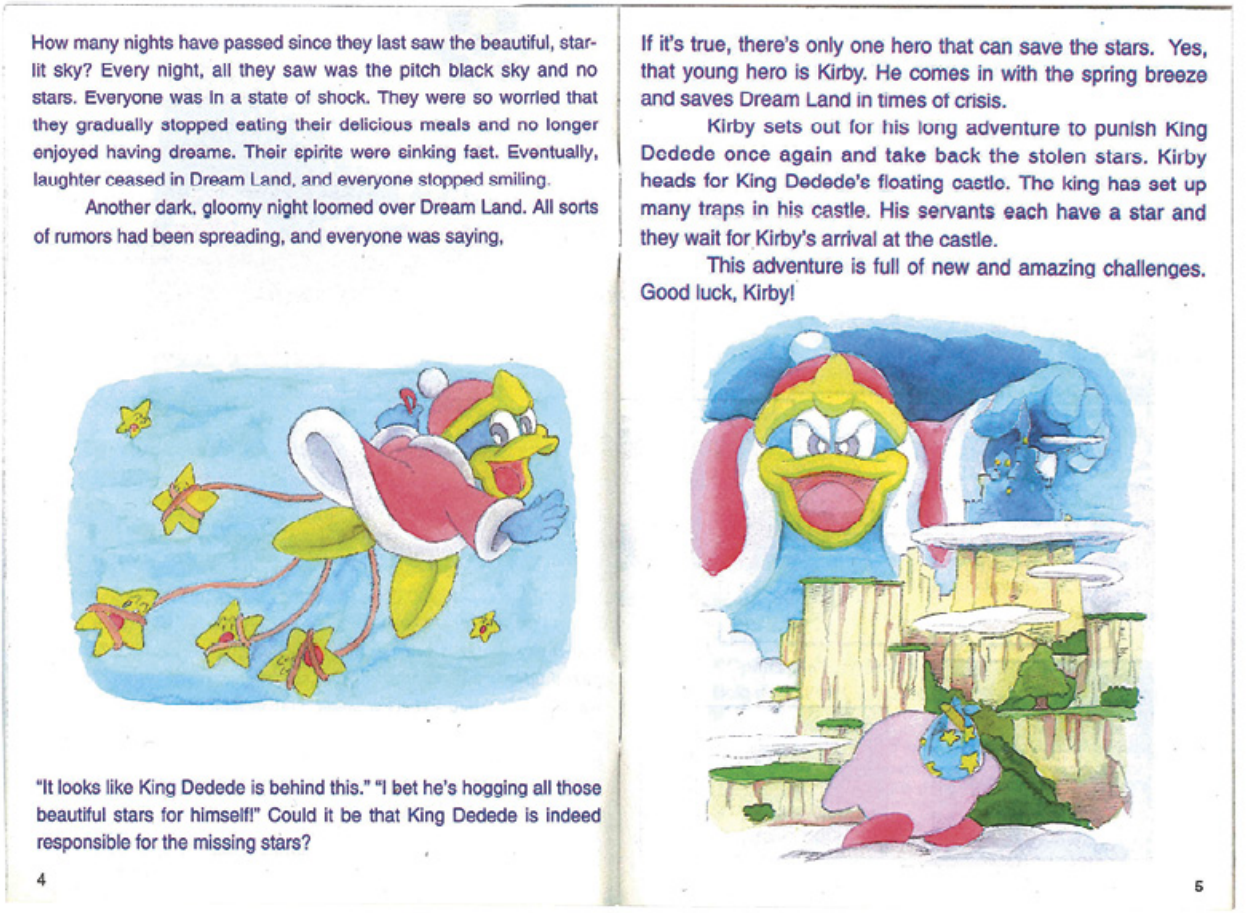

How many nights have passed since they last saw the beautiful, star-lit sky? Every night, all they saw was the pitch black sky and no stars. Everyone was in a state of shock. They were so worried that they gradually stopped eating their delicious meals and no longer enjoyed having dreams. Their spirits were sinking fast. Eventually, laughter ceased in Dream Land, and everyone stopped smiling.

Another dark, gloomy night loomed over Dream Land. All sorts of rumors had been spreading, and everyone was saying,

"It looks like King Dedede is behind this." "I bet he's hogging all those beautiful stars for himself!" Could it be that King Dedede is indeed responsible for the missing stars?

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This adventure is full of new and amazing challenges. Good luck, Kirby!

5

MB KIRBY

To fit the game into a smaller cartridge for its international release, certain aspects of *Kirby's Dream Course* were removed to fit in a 1MB chipset. This includes the aforementioned story cutscene.

TEST KIRBY

The content cut from the Japanese version includes debug test levels used by the game developers to test various enemies and terrain configurations.

PIRATE KIRBY

Nintendo had protected their proprietary cartridges from duplication and tampering since the 8-bit days, but *Kirby's Dream Course* took it several steps further by causing a number of negative consequences within the game should it fail to pass security checks.

For instance, if the game is detected as being pirated, it erases all saved data and forces a crash upon a Game Over or course completion, preventing progress. Hitting enemies and scoring hole-in-ones don't recover tomatoes or 1ups, respectively.

7 EARTHBOUND KIRBY

As *Kirby's Dream Course* and *EarthBound* were developed concurrently at HAL Laboratory, both games share certain sound effects.

8 MIX KIRBY

The Mix ability icon appears in the *Kirby's Dream Course*'s code, but was left unused in the final game.

9 UNUSED KIRBY

Another unused element of the game is a small ditch in the terrain. This obstacle was excluded due to the game's physics, which would cause Kirby to roll back and forth indefinitely without ever stopping.

10 SAKURAI KIRBY

Despite being a major release in the *Kirby* series, *Kirby's Dream Course* is one of a few key *Kirby* titles series creator Masahiro Sakurai was not involved with.

11 OUT OF BOUNDS KIRBY

When knocking Kirby off the course at night during a 2P match, a Flapper comes to his rescue instead of a Bronto Burt, the usual savior.

12 ESRB KIRBY

As the ESRB rating system did not exist up until this point, *Kirby's Dream Course* was the first *Kirby* game to be given a rating. Like most *Kirby* games, it was rated K-A (suitable for Kids to Adults).

13 HOUSE KIRBY

Kirby's Dream Course is the first game to depict Kirby's humble, dome-shaped abode. A gift built for Kirby by the residents of Dream Land for rescuing them from King Dedede, Kirby's home is rarely seen except for in the *Kirby: Right Back at Ya!* anime.

14 BOX KIRBY

Kirby has dominated HAL Laboratory's gameography since his inception with over 20+ titles to date. However, he almost had even more! Hal Laboratory's *BoxBoy!* series, developed largely by Kirby project veterans, was almost headlined by the pastel puffer himself. Ultimately, *BoxBoy!* director Yasuhiro Mukae decided the strictly Block-based gameplay wasn't a good fit and the square-shaped Qbby was created instead.

15 KIRBY CAFÉ

2016 saw the release of Kirby-themed cafés in Japan. Kirby Café serves food in the likeness of King Dedede, Waddle Dee, Meta Knight, and Kirby, among others. A unique soundtrack was developed for the café, which also contains a gift shop full of Kirby merchandise. Kirby overload? Nah, can there even be such a thing?

16 WORLD RECORD KIRBY

To commemorate Kirby's 20th anniversary, Nintendo hosted an event at the PAX Prime game convention in Seattle, Washington, on September 1, 2012. 536 fans helped break the Guinness World Record for most people blowing a chewing gum bubble simultaneously. Kirby would be so proud!

RAWR
Intel's
GAME ON
THREE DAY

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Kirby's Dream Course

Confidential Information

Video is restricted

Video is restricted

Speedrunner

10ooki

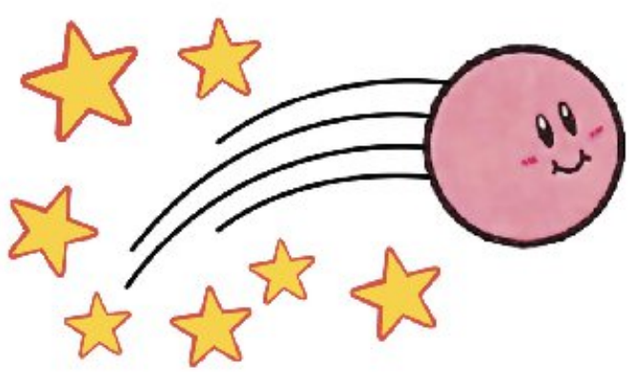
World Records Held: Any%, Any% All Golds, Extra%, 100%

When “10ooki” was younger he used to rent *Kirby’s Dream Course* each weekend, yet he could never quite finish the game. “I loved the combination of mini-golf, abilities, Kirby cuteness, and—at the time—cutting-edge pseudo-3D gameplay,” says 10ooki. “Every time I’d rent it I’d get a little bit further, but it was not an easy playthrough at all and I’d usually return it to the video store stuck somewhere in the very challenging course 7. When I got into speedrunning a few years ago, after I had got some strong times in classic 2D *Mario* platformers (*SMB3*, *SMB1*) I was looking for something really unique and different from other games and this game just seemed like a really quirky and original choice to me. This is, after all, a mini-golf puzzle platformer that features a boss battle! Once I started playing through it several times and started to think about how to go faster, I really started to appreciate the complexity and depth of the game’s physics. I became obsessed with figuring out ways to pull off insane shots consistently, and with a total of 128 holes in the game, there’s no shortage of optimizations to find.”

Currently a multiple speedrun world record holder for *Kirby’s Dream Course*, 10ooki provides invaluable tips for flashy hole-in-ones and quick completion times. For instance, did you know that hole-in-ones are actually slower than hole-in-twos?

Basic

Here is a brief guide to getting started with playing *Kirby’s Dream Course*. The emphasis is on speedrunning but the same movement tricks and insights also apply to getting “best scores.”



Movement Explained

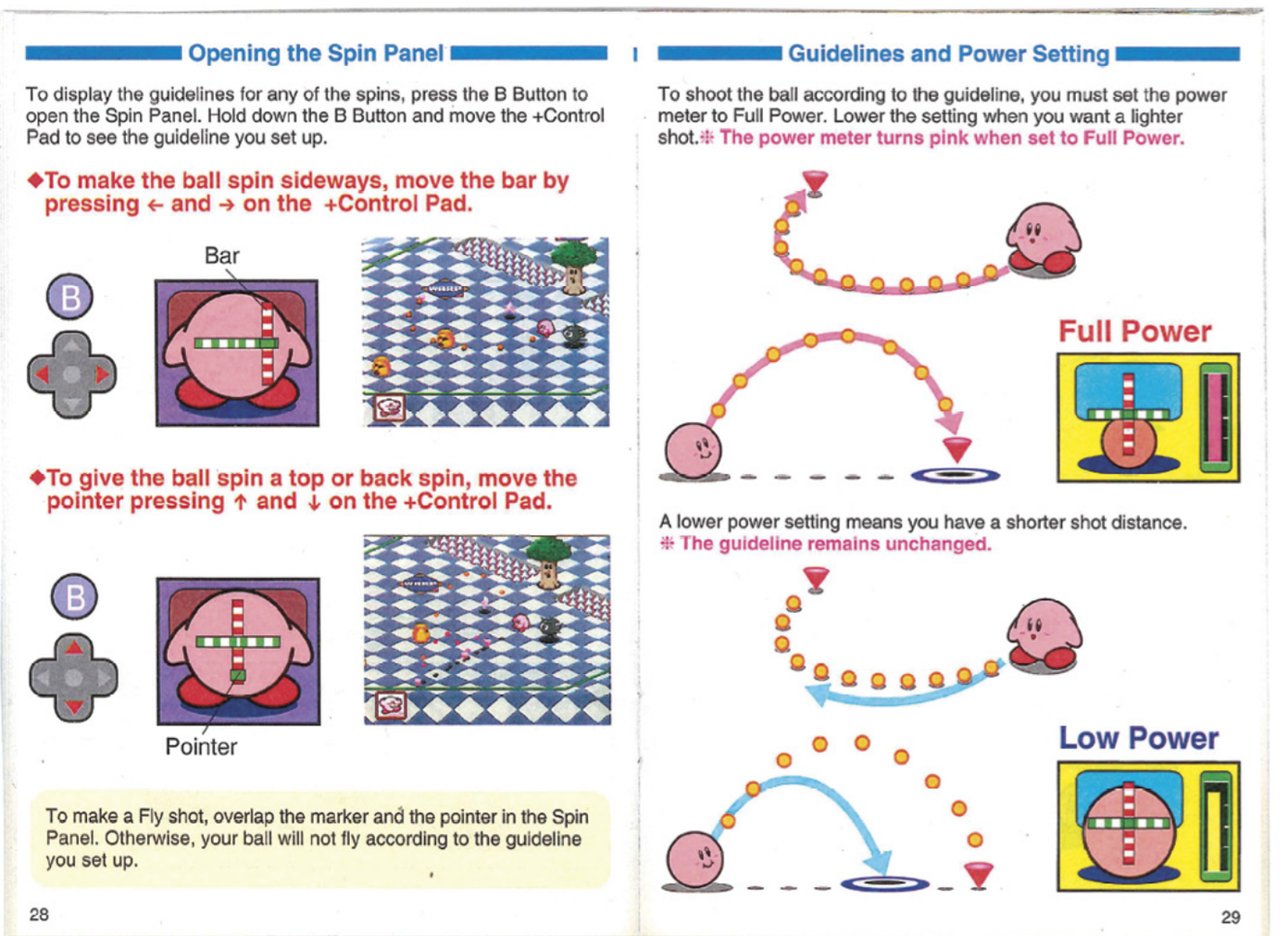
The key to becoming a super *Dream Course* player is understanding how movement in the game works. The golf inspiration might make you think that after you initiate your shot, you just watch and hope it goes as planned, but in *Kirby’s Dream Course* that’s not the case! You can actively affect the trajectory of Kirby by pressing A to “boost” even after you’ve started rolling, or you can use an ability to change up your shot completely! In some cases, taking advantage of this fact is the only way to get a hole-in-one or pull off a dramatic shot. I’ll explain the two types of shots below, and the effect that “boosts” have on each type of shot and how you can use it to pull off a super shot.

GROUND SHOT

In this shot mode, Kirby simply rolls along on the ground. It's a good idea to get a feel for how far Kirby will go on a ground shot given a particular power level on the shot. Once you have a good idea for how far 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% get you, it is a lot easier to aim, shoot, and go into the hole.

You can apply right or left-handed spin to your shot to curve around obstacles. Your shot-preview gives you a sense of what your trajectory will look like. However, be warned that if you put too much spin on the shot, Kirby can start going in circles or in less predictable ways. For beginners, avoid putting too much spin on the shot and try to see what you can do with aim for the most part.

On a ground shot, "boosting" by pressing A after your shot has started has the effect of maintaining your current speed for exactly three frames. What this means is that if you didn't put enough power on your shot, you may be able to compensate by boosting. If you can tell you're going to run out of steam before you reach the hole, try boosting rapidly and see if you can inch your way into the cup! It also means that if you do a full power shot and constantly boost throughout your shot you can potentially go much farther and maintain much more speed than you otherwise could, enabling you to pull off maneuvers that would otherwise be impossible.



Opening the Spin Panel

To display the guidelines for any of the spins, press the B Button to open the Spin Panel. Hold down the B Button and move the +Control Pad to see the guideline you set up.

◆To make the ball spin sideways, move the bar by pressing ← and → on the +Control Pad.

◆To give the ball spin a top or back spin, move the pointer pressing ↑ and ↓ on the +Control Pad.

To make a Fly shot, overlap the marker and the pointer in the Spin Panel. Otherwise, your ball will not fly according to the guideline you set up.

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Guidelines and Power Setting

To shoot the ball according to the guideline, you must set the power meter to Full Power. Lower the setting when you want a lighter shot.❊ The power meter turns pink when set to Full Power.

A lower power setting means you have a shorter shot distance.
❊ The guideline remains unchanged.

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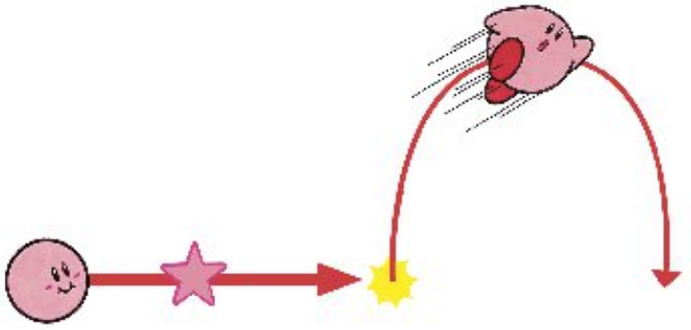
JUMP SHOT

In this shot mode, Kirby takes an airborne trajectory like a golf shot. Just like with ground shots, it's a good idea to practice a bit to figure out how high and far you go for 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% shots.

Jump shots can also be equipped with both left/right spin as well as top/back spin. The effect of the spin occurs only when Kirby hits the ground, altering his normal bouncing trajectory. Put top spin on your shot to make Kirby zip forward when he hits the ground to cover more distance. Put back spin on your shot to make sure Kirby doesn't bounce too far forward—or with enough backspin he can go backwards on his bounces instead of forward. This is very useful when a jump shot is required but going too far would shoot you off the map. In all cases, shot preview can help you gauge what's going to happen when you take your shot.



There is also “boosting” for jump shots when you press A, however you have to press A right when you’re about to hit the ground. When Kirby boosts from a jump shot, he bounces much farther than he would otherwise. Sometimes this is required to be able to clear a gap or scoop up a sequence of enemies on a challenging hole.

Getting a feel for how to control both of these shot types is key to becoming a super player. One way to practice these is to just try out different types of shots and learn by experimenting. It may seem silly to spend an hour shooting around on the first hole of course 1, but you can learn a lot of valuable things that will help you out down the road!

Know Your Abilities!

One of the things that makes *Dream Course* different from almost any other mini-golf game is the inclusion of special abilities. You obtain a Copy Ability by rolling over an enemy that provides one, and whatever enemy you roll over replaces the ability you already have. Abilities are activated by pressing B once a shot has started, and each ability does its own unique thing. It’s important to learn what every ability in the game does, when the best time/place to use it is, and how to control that power to your best advantage. Many of the abilities are self-explanatory, but others like the UFO require some practice to get used to. Getting the fastest possible shot or some tricky hole-in-ones often requires a carefully deployed ability, so don’t forget to incorporate them into your game!

How to Beat King Dedede

OK so you finally beat all eight courses and you're ready to fight King Dedede! But...how come this guy never dies? How many shots does he take!?! When I first played this I was really confused why I couldn't seem to beat King Dedede, but in fact it's quite simple. King Dedede only takes damage when you hit him in his face/upper body. This means that you have to hit him with a well-timed jump shot; a grounder will not suffice. The simplest way to beat Dedede is to wait for him to get fairly close to you, and then pummel him with jump shots from there. There's a faster way to beat him outlined in the advanced section, but as a beginner this will work just fine. It takes exactly four hits to take King Dedede down, eight hits if you're fighting him in Extra Mode.

Advanced

OK, so now you're getting good. You can reliably beat the game and want to go faster or pull off crazier shots. Here are some advanced techniques that will help you achieve those goals:

Power Meter Revisited

As you improve, you've probably started making notes for yourself on what type of shot you want for each hole. But have you noticed that sometimes the exact same power level on the power meter seems to give you a different result? What gives? It turns out that each visual of the power meter can encode two levels of power: a low value and a high value. So you might have thought you hit exactly 75% power based on the meter, but your actual value could be a "low 75%" or a "high 75%". Keep this in mind as you develop your strategies!

Slope Boosts

Watch a top-tier run of *Dream Course* and you might notice that it's possible to get a lot more amplitude when rolling from a flat surface up a slope than you might have thought. What gives? It's a trick called 'slope boosting' in which a well-timed boost right at the junction between a flat and sloped surface can send you zipping up the slope extra fast. A great example of slope boosting can be seen in the 3-8 hole-in-one, in which a slope boost at the very beginning gives you the amplitude and speed needed to get into the hole.

Soft Resets

If you're doing speedruns, you're obviously in a hurry. When you beat a course, you don't have time to Kirby dance around; you've got to get to the next course! Fortunately, the developers had speedrunners in mind with this game and gave us a gift: the soft reset. After your ball goes into the cup on the final hole of a course, hold the left and right shoulder buttons + Start + Select and the game takes you back to the title screen. Your progress through the game, however, will have been recorded, enabling you to start the next course as quickly as possible.

Hole-in-Ones Are Slower

Why do the top runs often take two shots instead of one? Why do they whiff the first shot before making a hole in one? The answer is simple: getting a hole-in-one is usually slower than getting a hole-in-two! This is because of the lengthy fanfare animation that plays when you get a hole-in-one. So for speedruns, it's worth taking two shots instead of one in most cases; think of it like waiting to avoid fireworks in *Super Mario Bros. 1* or *3*. Note that for the last hole of any course you don't need to do this since the soft reset strategy outlined above skips the hole-in-one fanfare anyways. If you're still learning, I don't recommend skipping hole-in-ones as they give you lives, which can come in handy on some of the more challenging courses. However, once you're ready, you should start performing these strategies as soon as possible to save all the frames you can.

Adjusting Your Spin

It takes time for the game to draw your shot preview as you tweak spin settings. Save frames by knowing what spin you want in advance, and adjusting it 'blind' when you initiate your shot.

How to Beat King Dedede Fast

You already know how to beat King Dedede, but did you know you could do it much faster? Instead of waiting for Dedede to get close to you to hit him, it's possible to perform a bank shot off the divider to hit him immediately without waiting at all. This saves a good five seconds of time. To execute it, perform the following inputs: Up -> Right Shoulder button -> Left D-pad -> Left D-pad; initiate your shot and hold left on the D-pad until you get a full left spin, neutral top/back spin and fire the shot. Kirby sails toward the green divider on the right-hand side of the screen. Perform a boost right before he impacts the divider. If the inputs were performed quickly enough, Kirby banks off the divider and delivers a hit to King Dedede's ugly mug. Do this a total of four times and you'll beat King Dedede as fast as the pros!

Expert

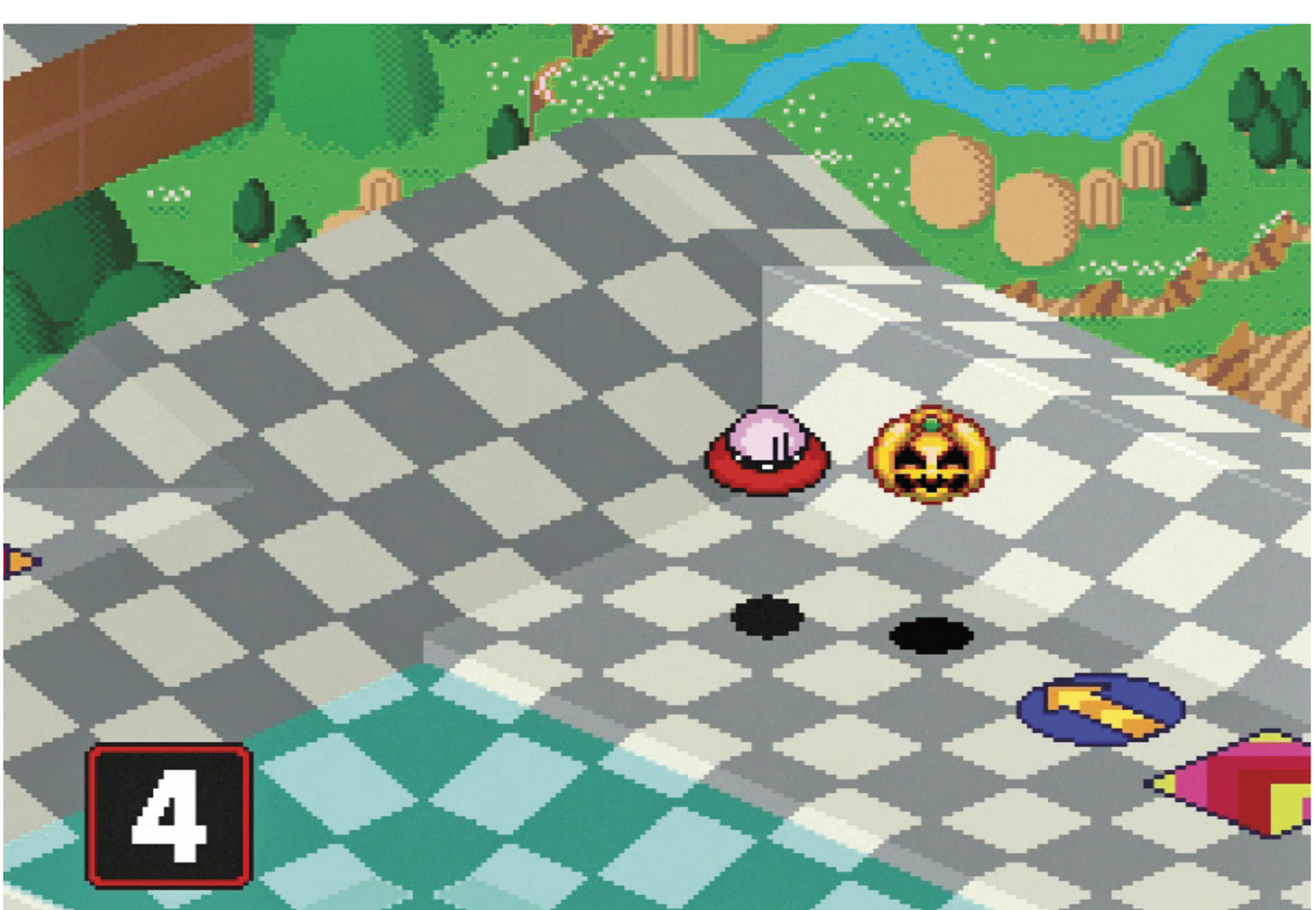
So you're a super player and now you want to go for the world record! Here are some advanced tricks and glitches that can be used to push your time to the limit.

Aim Less

Try to plan your shots so that you need to aim as little as possible, ideally not at all. Aiming wastes time. If you need to aim for a shot, try using spin as it requires fewer inputs to achieve.

UFO Course 7

This was an idea developed by my *Dream Course* partner in crime, "r0bd0g", which saves a good chunk of time. Instead of doing course 7 the intended way, perform 7-1 such that you obtain the UFO ability and carry it with you through to the next several holes. The UFO allows for high speed and clear-cut paths to scoop up enemies as quickly as possible. Be warned though, controlling the UFO requires a lot of practice and tests your reflexes!



Speed Inheritance Glitch

Sometimes it's possible for insane speeds to be achieved for extended periods of time by taking advantage of the "speed inheritance glitch". When you activate some abilities, such as Spark and UFO, they have the property that sustains the speed you were going at when you activated the ability. Thus, if there is a way to momentarily go faster than you normally would and then switch to one of these abilities, that momentary super speed now becomes your overall speed, enabling you to save lots of time!

A great example of this trick can be seen in 6-5. In this case, we take advantage of the fact that when a tornado hits a bumper, it is ejected backward in a way that momentarily has an insanely fast speed. By switching to the Spark ability during this window of time, you are able to shoot Kirby around the map at near-relativistic speeds. This can also be easily achieved by using the UFO ability after rolling onto a booster panel. Be warned, however, the high speeds obtained with these methods require very precise planning or super-fast reflexes to control; otherwise you might find yourself launched off the map!

Water Memory Glitch

By now you've probably done a jump shot with some spin over a water hazard in the game. You probably noticed that when you hit the water and have some top spin, you bounce ahead much like a stone skipping across a pond. What you probably didn't know is that the game stores in its memory what it thinks should happen if you hit the water, even if you don't actually hit the water on that shot. Remarkably, this value is left stored in the memory even after your shot is completed, meaning that if on some future shot Kirby rolls into a water hazard where he would normally sink if there is a value stored in this memory it will actually cause him to unexpectedly skip like a stone instead!

We can take advantage of this "water memory" to execute otherwise completely impossible trick shots. As an example, in a top tier run, a jump shot in 3-5 is performed over water with a specific spin setting to store a water memory for a later hole. In 3-7, we exploit this water memory to enable Kirby to reach an island in the middle of the water that he would not normally be able to reach by a ground shot, saving almost two seconds compared to the intended strategy.

Rounding Error Glitch

Because *Dream Course* is an isometric game, trigonometric calculations underlie much of the game's physics. However, if your speed is suitably high, the trigonometric tables available to the game cannot accurately compute your trajectory. This means that in some instances, Kirby is offset from his intended path when he bounces off a wall or divider owing to a "rounding error" in the trigonometric table. A classic example of this that frustrates people is in 6-1, in which the obvious strategy to get a hole in one (use the Fireball ability) often misses the hole apparently for no reason. This happens because the rounding error glitch has displaced Kirby off of the path that you'd expect. However, this rounding error can also be used to your advantage. This trick is used in 3-4 to put Kirby just a tiny bit closer to the hole for his second shot, enabling you to pull off a shot that wouldn't work otherwise.

Optimal Shot Trees

This isn't a glitch so much as the main approach to obtaining high-level optimized times in the game. The key is to develop strategies for which it is possible for the shot to succeed across a range of power settings on the meter, ideally, five frames of power meter. Each power setting may require its own specific sequence and timing of boosts to make the shot work, or may require using an ability in one case but not in the other. You will have to learn to recognize which power meter level you obtained quickly if you need to adjust on the fly; or you will need to learn to recognize which power level you got based on where Kirby stops to know how to make your next shot work. The deeper you work out your shot tree, the greater your chances of squeezing out a little extra time for a hole are. However, it can take a lot of work to memorize all the possibilities and react in time to pull them off. Some optimized shot-trees have as many as a dozen possibilities for a single hole. As you improve at the game, continue to add more depth to your shot-trees at a rate that makes sense to you until there's no situation you can't handle!

Kirby's Dream Course

Legacy

The gluttonous gumball is no stranger to spin-offs and mini-games. Kirby's spherical shape makes him perfect for whacking, bouncing, launching, and pretty much any other activity that's likely detrimental to a sentient flesh-balloon's well-being.The success can largely be attributed to the accessibility of the series; it was designed so that anyone could pick up and play. More importantly, it was always designed with a social aspect in mind, so that anyone could pick up and play *with friends*. Each entry has added something new, but built upon the same foundation laid by the original development team way back in 1992.

Kirby's Avalanche

1995, Super NES

Kirby's Avalanche (or *Kirby's Ghost Trap*, as it's known in Europe), is a *Dr. Mario*-style puzzle game for 1-2 players. There is no *Kirby's Avalanche* for the Super Famicom, however, as the game is actually an adaptation of the 1991 title, *Puyo Puyo*.

Kirby's Block Ball

1996, Game Boy

Kirby's Block Ball took the classic *Breakout* formula and infused it with the now-iconic Kirby spirit and mechanics. For this particular title, HAL Laboratory worked directly with legendary Game Boy engineer, Gunpei Yokoi.

Kirby's Toy Box

1996, SFC Satellaview

Kirby's Toy Box was released exclusively via the Super Famicom's Satellaview broadcast service and included a variety of potential downloads. Among the *Toy Box* games were Baseball, Pinball, Star Break, Balls Round and Round, Cannonball, Arranging Balls, Pachinko, and Ball Rally, making it one of the most robust Kirby minigame collections at the time. Certain aspects of these ultra-rare games were used in later *Kirby* titles, such as KO'd Kirbys turning into angels and floating off-screen (seen again in *Kirby Mass Attack*).

Kirby's Star Stacker

1997/1998, Game Boy/SFC

Kirby's Star Stacker for the Game Boy revisited the puzzle mechanics of *Kirby's Avalanche*, albeit with an emphasis on obliterating stars and cute animals instead of color-coded ghosts. This marked Kirby's final appearance on the Game Boy.

A 16-bit version, *Kirby's Sparkling Kids*, was released for the Super Famicom a year later as part of the *Nintendo Power* downloadable service.

Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble

2001, Game Boy Color

Known as *Roly-Poly Kirby* in Japan, *Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble* for the Game Boy Color included a built-in accelerometer used to control Kirby. Gameplay proceeds vertically as Kirby moves through a series of obstacles to reach the goal at the end of each level. This type of gameplay would later become extremely popular on smart phones, which also have similar built-in hardware for motion controls.

Kirby Air Ride

2003, Nintendo GameCube

Originally in development for the Nintendo 64, *Kirby Air Ride* is one of the few spin-off titles directed by series creator Masahiro Sakurai. *Kirby Air Ride* is perhaps best described as part *F-Zero X*, part *Mario Kart 64*, and part *Super Monkey Ball* while featuring many staples of the *Kirby* franchise such as Copy Abilities. Aside from being totally awesome, it's also one of the extremely rare times a *Kirby* game has featured full 360-degree movement in a 3D environment!

Kirby: Canvas Curse

2005, Nintendo DS

Kirby: Canvas Curse (aka *Kirby: Power Paintbrush* in Europe, aka *Touch! Kirby* in Japan) is a platforming game unlike any other in the *Kirby* series. Instead of the traditional controls, Kirby automatically rolls along and must be guided through stages by using the DS' touchscreen to create rainbow paths. A sequel, *Kirby and the Rainbow Curse*, was released for the Wii U in 2015. However, players can control Kirby directly, unlike in *Canvas Curse*.

Kirby's Dream Course

Kirby's Dream Course Credits

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Programmers

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Teruyuki Gunji

Seiji Otoguro

Yoshimi Takahashi

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Map Designers

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Kensuke Tanabe

Hideki Fujii

Music Composer

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Originally Designed By

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Special Thanks To

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Chieko Obikane

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Shigeki Yamashiro

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Masaya Akiyama

Shane C Allala

Jim Wornell

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Producers

Shigeru Miyamoto

Satoru Iwata

Co-Producers

Yasuhiro Sakai

Takao Shimizu

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi

Donkey Kong Country

Overview

DEVELOPER

Nintendo EAD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

November 21, 1990

IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NITE...

Storms lashed the rugged terrain of Donkey Kong Island, home of the famous video game ape and his family and friends. Near Donkey Kong's tree house, a small monkey named Diddy cowered in fear of the savage lightning which periodically illuminated the lush, dark jungle that covered most of the island. Donkey Kong had assigned Diddy to guard duty on this awful night, and he was not happy about his fate.

Donkey Kong's earlier pep talk kept creeping back into Diddy's mind. "Ok, little buddy," Donkey had said in his patronizing voice. "As part of your hero training, you've got to stand guard tonight over my bananas...I'll relieve you at midnight, so try and stay awake until then!"

Buddy? Yeah, right. Now he was alone. Alone unless you counted the unknown threats which lurked behind every tree that he glimpsed during the lightning flashes. The Kremlings were out there, this much was certain. They coveted Donkey Kong's banana stockpile, the largest on the island, and probably in the world. A treasure in potassium and Vitamin A. The perfect food. "Ahhh...delicious bananas..." The thought of DK's golden hoard almost made Diddy forget his uncomfortable situation. But a rustling in the under-growth and the sound of several snapping twigs brought him out of his reverie.

"W-w-who goes there?!" Diddy challenged the sounds in the darkened, dripping foliage. There was no answer but the flashing of claws and teeth, followed by a fleeting vision of many reptilian eyes and a crack of thunder. Diddy somersaulted into the fray with his signature cartwheel attack, but he was quickly overcome by the weight of many scaly assailants. The enormous bulk of Klump the Kremling landed on top of Diddy, knocking him senseless. His last memory was of a hissing voice... "It'ssss the sssmall one... Ssseal him inssside thisss barrel and tosss it into the bussshesss... Donkey Kong'sss bananasss are ourssss!"

The barrel lid closed on Diddy, blotting out even the fleeting light of the storm. Seconds later, the barrel flew through the air, courtesy of Klump's army boot-assisted punt, and landed roughly in the jungle foliage.

Diddy Kong knew no more.

The entire Donkey Kong clan was oblivious as the Kremlings then loaded the banana hoard into their Kremling karts and wheeled them off through the jungle, leaving an obvious trail of dropped fruit from their overloaded conveyances.

The next morning, Donkey Kong was awakened by frantic shouting of his name.

"Keep it down!!" he growled. He suddenly realized what time it was. "Morning already...I slept through my watch!" Falling out of bed and through his tree house door, Donkey Kong slid down the tree house ladder without using any of the rungs, and assumed his characteristic fighting pose, with sun-blinded, squinting eyes! One swift blow was all that was needed to leave him sprawled on the floor, face down! He groggily rolled over to see the familiar wrinkled, white-bearded, grouchy face of his old granddad "Cranky Kong" peering down at him. In his heyday, Cranky was the original Donkey Kong who battled Mario in several of his own games.

"What 'cha do that for?!" Donkey Kong asked, knowing full well that Cranky was prone to cuffing him at every whim.

"Take a look inside your banana cave. You're in for a big surprise!" Cranky crackled.

Donkey's mind raced as he vaulted to the cave and peered inside. Instead of the dull golden glow of thousands of bananas, there were only a few discarded peels. These had been trampled into the dirt by hundreds of reptilian feet, judging from the many three-toed footprints that covered the damp cavern floor. But what about...

"Diddy's gone, too!" Cranky laughed. "That's what you get for shirking your responsibility, you good-for-nothing bum! In my days we would have been happy to stand guard in the rain, 'cause that might have meant having an extra frame of animation! Of course, having rain would have been impossible, given our pitiful processing power, but..."

Donkey Kong stood there in stunned disbelief and hadn't heard most of what Cranky said. "Diddy...gone...My little buddy..." he murmured to himself.

Donkey Kong was suddenly filled with conviction. "The Kremlings will pay!" he raged. "I'll hunt them down through every corner of my island, until I have every last banana from my hoard back!!"

"Find your little buddy and retrieve a bunch of bananas?!" Cranky snorted. "What kind of game idea is that?! Where's the screaming damsel in distress?!"

"Diddy's obsession with being like me has gone too far! He may be a long way from being a true video game hero, but he had the guts, the reflexes, the heart..."

"If you ask me, neither of you are ready for prime time," Cranky interrupted. "You'll never be as popular a character as I was! Why, in my heyday, kids lined up to play my games! The quarters were stacked on the machine as they waited for their turn! If you go on this ridiculous adventure, you'll be lucky to sell ten copies!"

Donkey Kong fumed. He usually let Cranky's rambling roll off his back, but this time was different. "What do you know about adventure, you flea-bitten old ape?" yelled Donkey Kong, edging closer and closer, braving Cranky's cane, until he was totally in his face. "I'm sick of hearing about your boring, single screen adventures! Diddy's in trouble, my banana hoard is gone, and I'm going to get them all back!"

Donkey Kong stormed off in search of his missing buddy, following the trail of bananas the Kremlings had dropped.

"Well, it's not exactly rescuing a Princess, but it'll do in a pinch," Cranky snorted as DK disappeared into the lush jungle. After a moment's hesitation, Cranky followed him. "The lad may just need my help..." he mumbled to himself. "Kids today...they just don't have any respect for their elders..."

The New Model

In the summer of 1993, Tony Harman was traveling the globe in search of the next big thing. At the time, Mr. Harman served as Product Acquisitions and Development Manager for Nintendo of America, and he was about to make his greatest discovery. Upon visiting the humble offices of Rare, Ltd., nestled away in the English countryside, Mr. Harman viewed an impressive demonstration of a 3D-modeled boxer running on the Super NES. It wasn't a game, but rather a glimpse into the future: Nintendo's future, and the future of video games.

Nintendo president Hiroshi Yamauchi was not convinced, however, even given Rare's existing relationship with Nintendo. Rare had been no stranger to the original NES; they were one of the first Western developers granted a publishing license after reverse-engineering Nintendo's hardware. The company proved to be a prolific developer during the 8-bit days, producing dozens of games before seemingly going silent altogether at the onset of the 16-bit age.

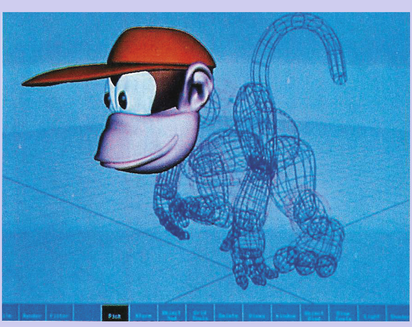
Yet still, Nintendo of Japan didn't believe an external developer could create a first-party Nintendo game up to the company's high standards. Mr. Harman proposed a deal with Mr. Yamauchi that instead of one of Nintendo's commercials—whose budgets averaged in the low millions—Mr. Harman and Rare would use the money to create a gaming project. The worst that could happen was that Nintendo was short a single commercial. Mr. Yamauchi finally agreed, and once again the ape with the odd name would forever shape Nintendo's fortunes.

It's difficult to explain just how impactful *Donkey Kong Country* was at the time of its release. Modern games can easily churn out real-time visuals eons beyond the pre-rendered visuals of *Donkey Kong Country*. But in 1994, having a video game feature visuals from the same machines that brought the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* to life was literally unbelievable—until it wasn't. To further contextualize the circumstances: *Toy Story*, the world's first fully computer-animated feature-length film, was released a year after *Donkey Kong Country*.

ACM

The visuals in *Donkey Kong Country* were created using a technique known as Advanced Computer Modeling (ACM). Rare defined ACM as the use of 3D graphics for every element in a game. The developer favored an advanced 3D modeling and animation software called PowerAnimator (also referred to as Alias), which was used for such films as *The Abyss* and *Independence Day*, among many others. PowerAnimator eventually evolved into Maya, a leading software suite for visual effects-laden motion pictures such as *Transformers*, *Harry Potter*, and *Kung Fury*.

Today, the actual 3D modeling procedure used for *Donkey Kong Country* is commonplace and possible to a certain extent even on low-end personal computers. But in the early 1990s it was uncharted territory and required immensely expensive Silicon Graphics-powered supercomputers. What made Rare's work with ACM even more impressive were the groundbreaking compression techniques that allowed the bleeding-edge 3D graphics to be displayed smoothly on a Super NES and even a Game Boy.



Upon seeing a work-in-progress version of the game, Nintendo president, Hiroshi Yamauchi, noted what an amazing addition the game would be for the Nintendo 64. When he was told the game was actually for the Super NES, Mr. Yamauchi completely rearranged Nintendo's plans for that year's Winter CES to make Donkey Kong the star of the show. Nintendo execs took to the stage and played out a lengthy, tongue-in-cheek safari skit, eventually revealing the triumphant return of their Kong who had reigned king over the arcades a decade prior. Again, the audience believed this to be a promising new title for Nintendo's upcoming Silicon Graphics-powered 64-bit console, but were left awe-struck when it was revealed to be the 16-bit Super NES.

Exposed

To further illustrate the disparity between now and then, gamers in 1994 rarely had the opportunity to glimpse unreleased games outside of tiny screenshots in magazines or brief glimpses in commercials. For *Donkey Kong Country*, Nintendo pulled out all the stops. A VHS tape titled *Donkey Kong Country: Exposed* was sent to *Nintendo Power* subscribers. The 15-minute-long video featured a tour of Nintendo of America's headquarters in Redmond, Washington. That alone was like getting a golden ticket to Willy Wonka's factory. Instead of Oompa Loompas, various NOA staff members from the secretive Treehouse are introduced as they revealed behind-the-scenes tidbits about the game.

The Treehouse, named after Donkey Kong's home, was where Nintendo of America worked on the quality assurance and localization of *Donkey Kong Country*. Access to the Treehouse was so limited that even high-ranking executives had never stepped foot inside. Again, to have a home video delivered to your doorstep, giving you access to the most covert department of a notoriously enigmatic company, was an unparalleled experience for fans.

Extensive gameplay is shown throughout the video, with testers enthusiastically discussing their favorite parts of the game and revealing specific secrets. Now anyone who had seen this tape would have exclusive knowledge of cool things to try out and show off to their friends when the game came out. As the teaser builds to the apex of its closing montage, with thunderous drumming alongside gameplay highlights, text on the screen calls out Nintendo's competitors by name and reminds everyone that *Donkey Kong Country* will be exclusive to their console. Their *16-bit* console. They had the ace up their sleeve and they weren't afraid to shout it from the treetops.

Donkey Kong Country: Exposed was one of the most successful video game marketing campaigns ever devised. Fans could watch the video with no prior knowledge of or interest in *Donkey Kong Country*, and 15 minutes later it was the only thing they could think about. Needless to say, the game was a relentless success, selling nearly 10M lifetime copies worldwide and single-handedly prolonging the commercial viability of the Super NES at a time when everyone else was pushing newer and more expensive hardware in an attempt to maintain relevancy.

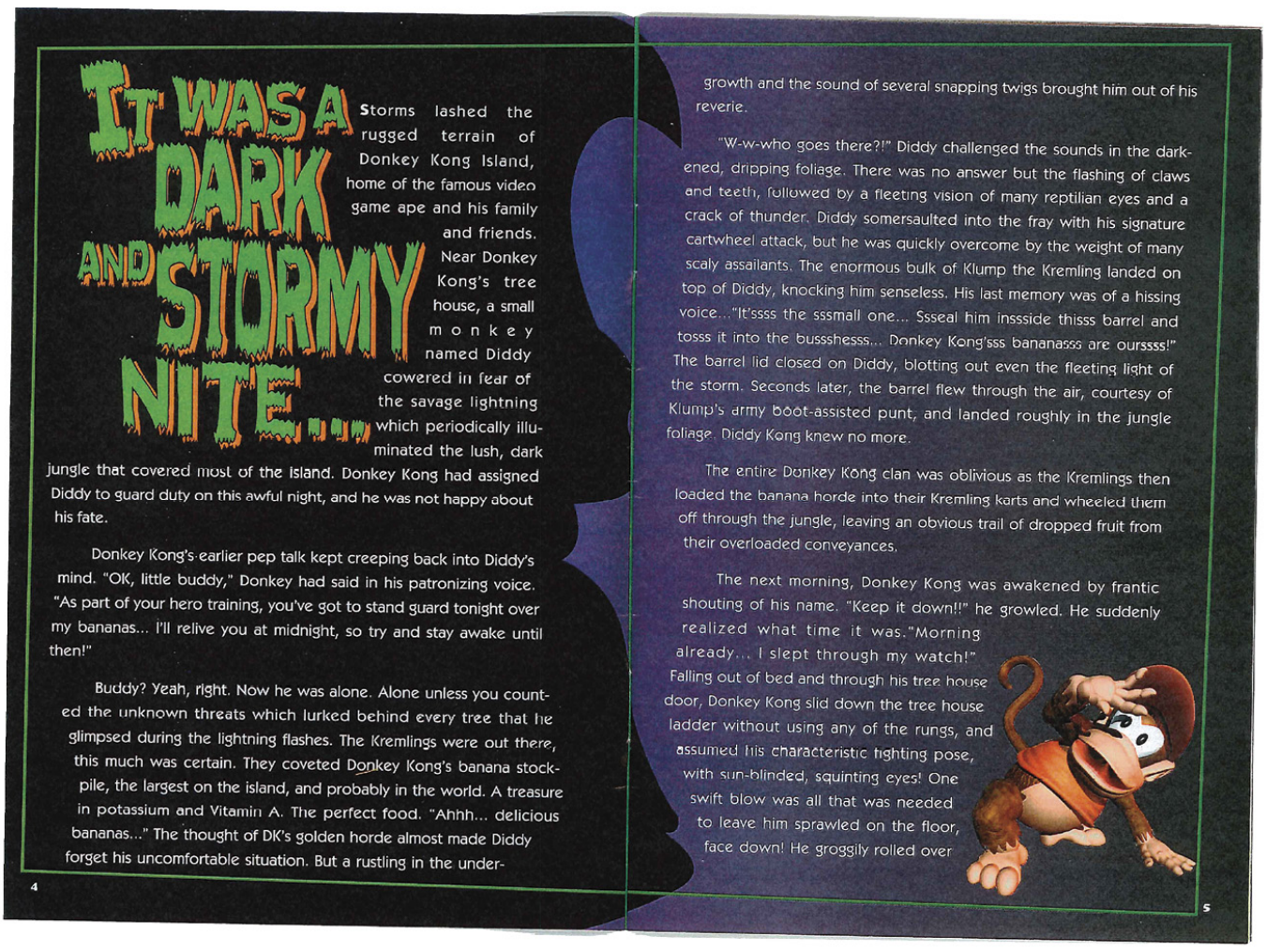
Donkey Kong Country

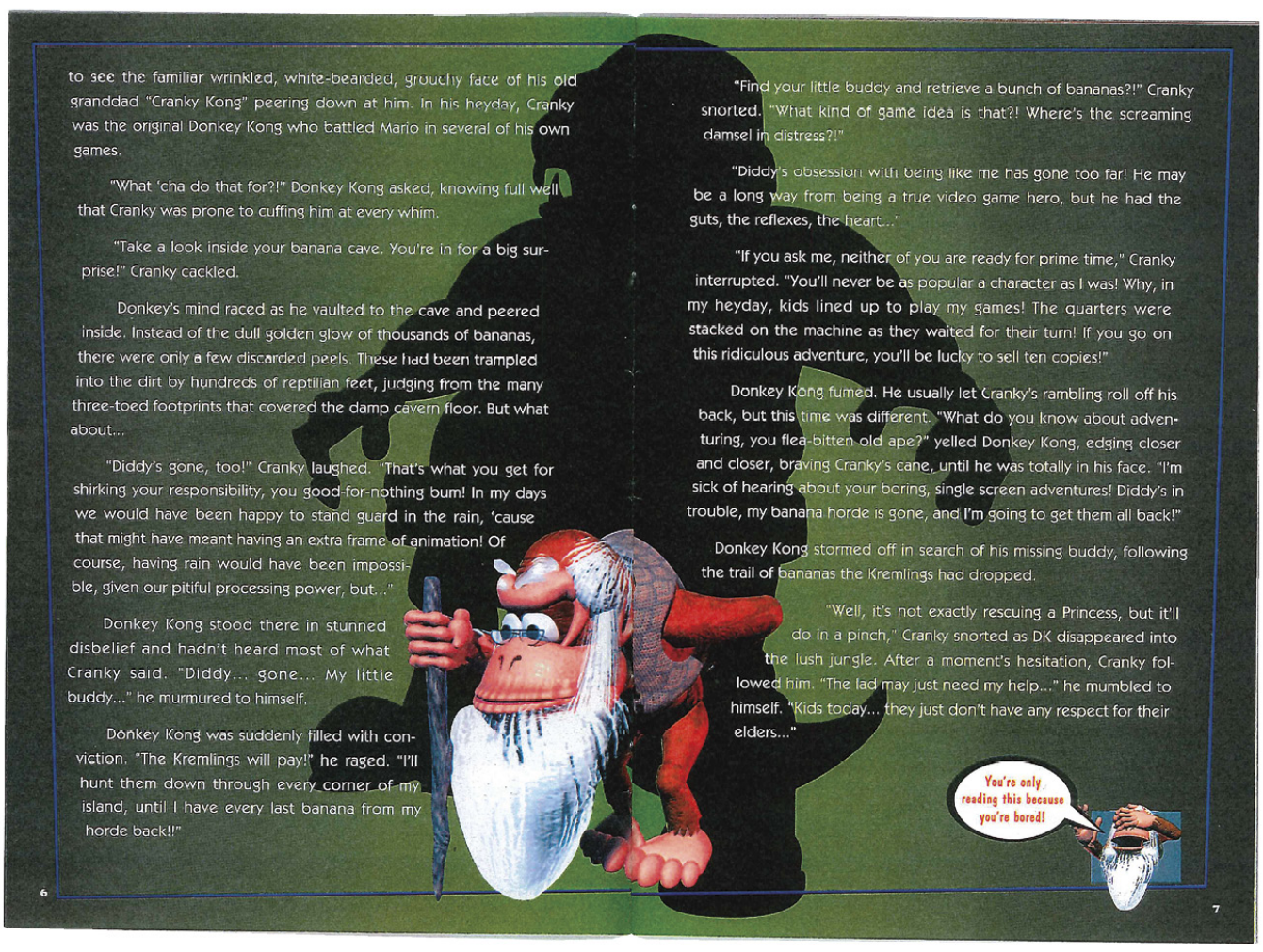
More Than Just a Pretty Ape

While *Donkey Kong Country*'s visuals are its most prominent and celebrated attribute, Rare also managed to create a truly refreshing platformer. Looking to *Super Mario Bros. 3* as the pinnacle of 2D platformers, Rare aimed for the same structure while emphasizing "flow." Through meticulous fine-tuning of stage layouts and gameplay mechanics, Rare created a playground where "skilled players would be able to move effortlessly through levels at great speed."

If Donkey and Diddy's feet couldn't carry them fast enough, stages were littered with an abundance of barrels that would rocket the Kongs from point A to B, often in rapid succession. This allowed even casual players to feel a sense of exhilaration with very little exertion—at least in the earlier areas of the game. And of course, it wouldn't be a game with gorillas without being able to swing from ropes and vines!

Donkey Kong Country reinvented the concept of "hit points" with the Tag Team system. Both Donkey and Diddy can travel together, and players can swap between them at will to make use of their individual strengths and playstyles (Diddy's faster, Donkey's stronger). If one Kong takes damage, he runs off to lick his wounds, allowing the player to proceed as the remaining Kong. Finding a DK barrel revives the missing character (don't question the science behind all of this), and prevents the next hit from sending them back to a checkpoint or the start of the level like it would in other platformers.





But where *Donkey Kong Country* truly excelled was in rewarding players with a seemingly endless cornucopia of collectibles and secrets. From the very first screen of the very first level, players are rewarded for daring to go against the typical "run right" formula of previous sidescrollers: they can visit Donkey Kong's empty banana hoard for a quick reminder of why they're on this adventure; they can jump up and enter Donkey Kong's treehouse for a sneak peek at the character's home and a free 1-up balloon; and they can take to the treetops, which allows them to avoid enemies and access otherwise unreachable goodies.

This was the most important lesson in the entire game: be vigilant and experiment and you *will* be rewarded. Throughout the game there are barrels waiting to launch the Kongs into secret areas just off-screen. TNT barrels or animal buddies can reveal secret passageways. If a bottomless pit seems different from all the others, try jumping into it and you'll likely be rewarded with another secret! Secrets are sometimes even layered on top of each other for some extra satisfying secret-ception! Quite often, playing *Donkey Kong Country* feels like a frantic sprint through a carnival, with prizes and exciting new discoveries in every direction.

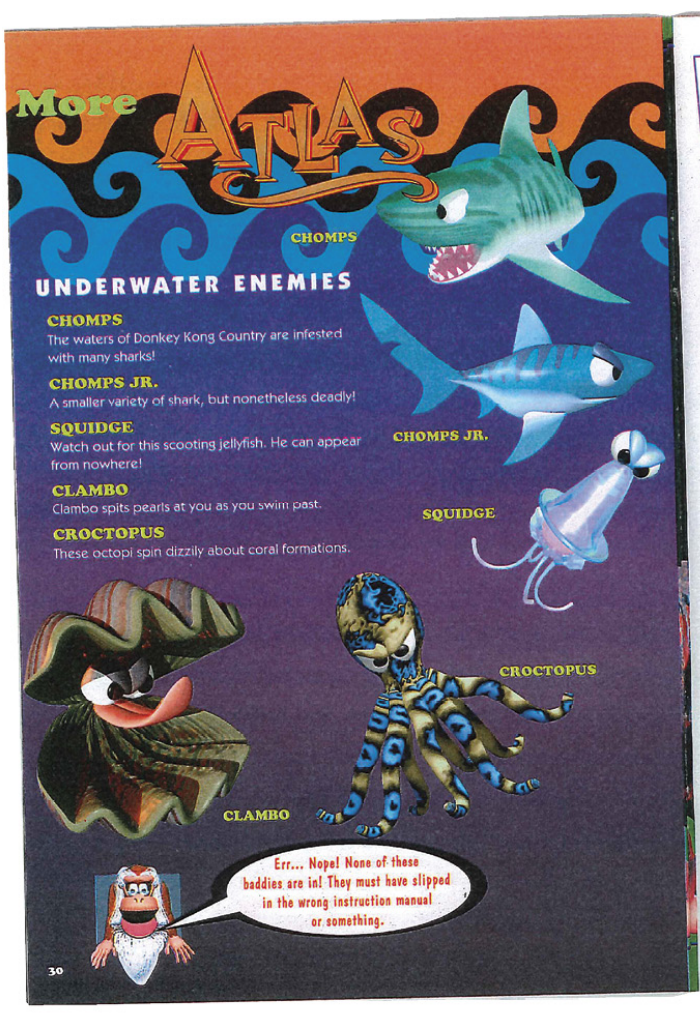
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

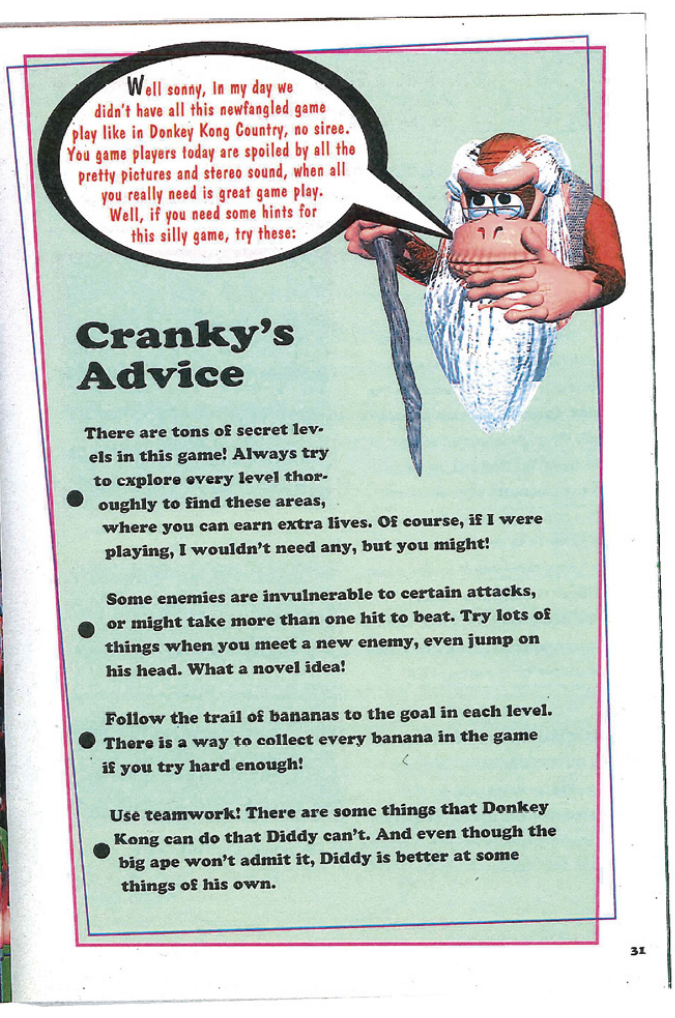
Donkey Kong Country
Soundtrack

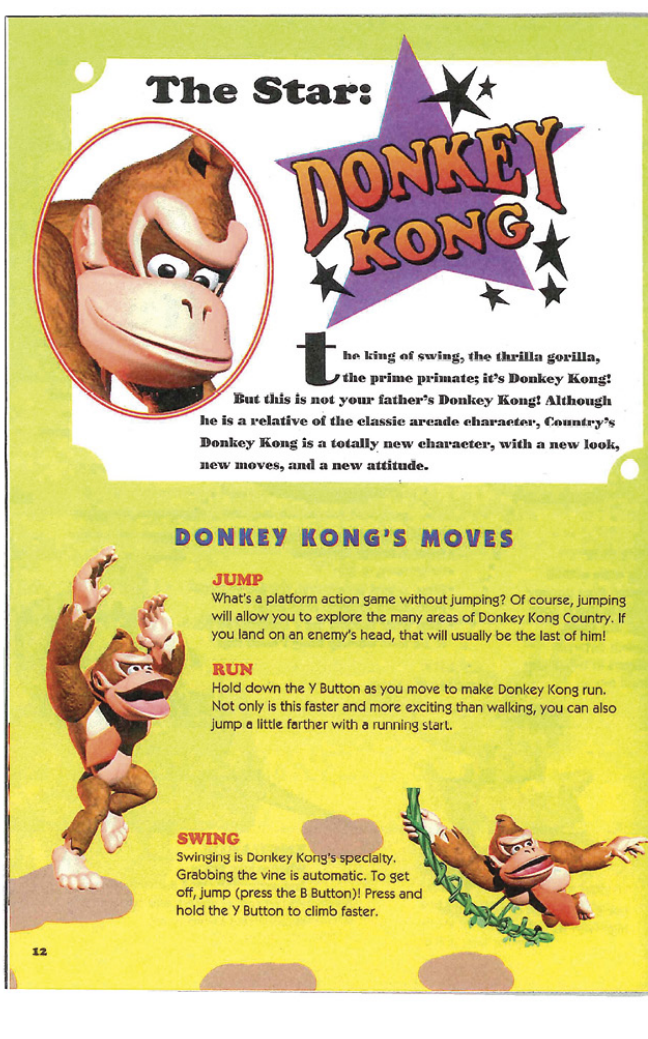
David Wise was the composer for *Donkey Kong Country*, though he didn't know it at first. Working as a freelance musician who had previously scored nearly a decade's worth of Rare-developed titles such as *Wizards & Warriors* and *Battletoads*, Mr. Wise composed three demo tracks for the new *Donkey Kong* game, fully expecting that someone from Nintendo of Japan would eventually take over. *Donkey Kong* was far too important, right? However, not only did he keep the gig, composing some of the most memorable game music of all time in the process, but his work secured a full-time position at Rare where he stayed for 15 more years. And those three demo tracks? They were combined to become "DK Island Swing," the first level's theme.

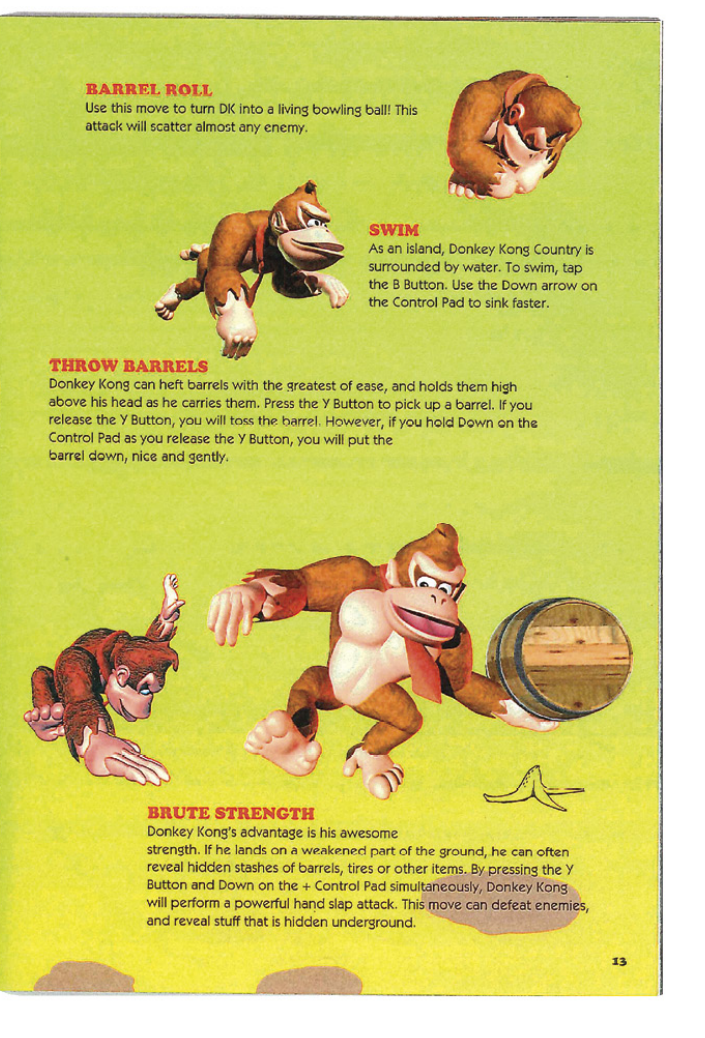
The *Donkey Kong Country* soundtrack, co-composed with Eveline Novakovic, drew inspirations from Koji Kondo's work on *Mario* and *Zelda*, the 1993 Super NES game *Plok*, as well as synthesized film scores and rock and dance music from the early '80s. Each level's theme is designed to evoke not only the environment itself, but also to complement the gameplay happening on-screen. Mr. Wise attributed the high quality of the soundtrack in large part to the revolutionary compression techniques that the team at Rare labored over.

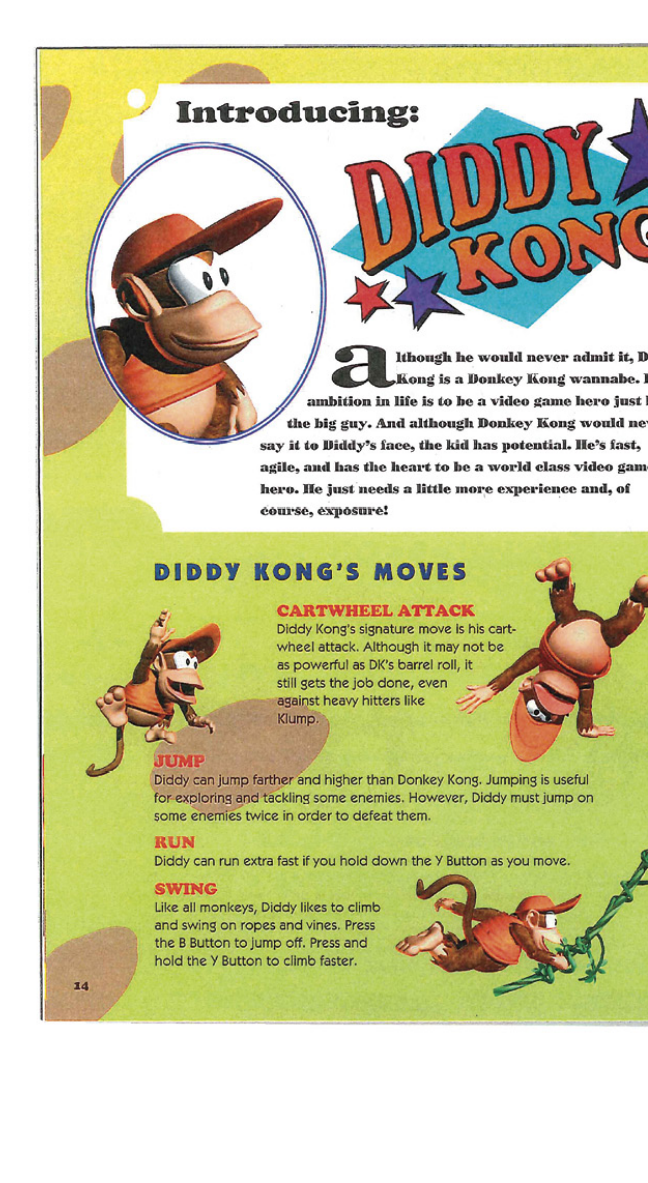
Donkey Kong Country's felicitous musical accompaniment would come to define the series just as much as its exceptional gameplay and incredible graphics.

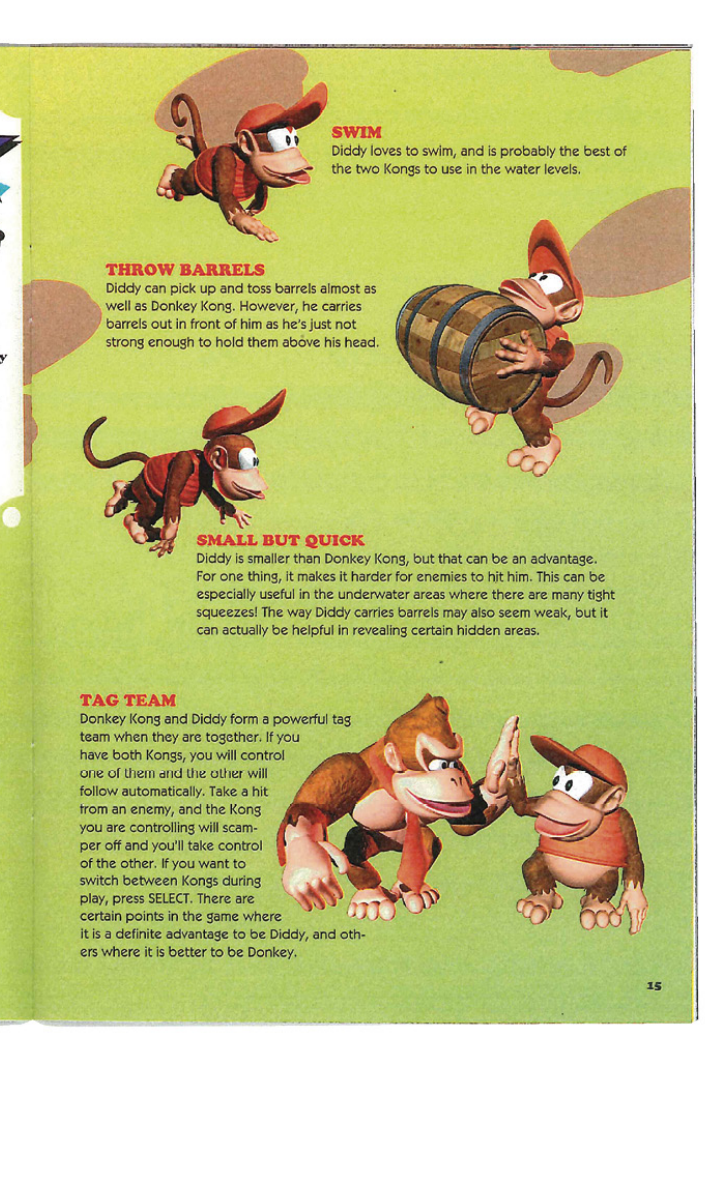












In the *Donkey Kong Country*: *Exposed* promotional video, developers from Rare discuss visiting the zoo to observe the movement and behavior of real gorillas. However, many years later, it was revealed that their findings were “completely unsuitable” for what was intended to be a fast-paced platforming game. Rare instead did all of the animations by hand, experimenting with 15 different versions, including some attempts built around the movements of rabbits and frogs. The final animations ended up being loosely based on horses.

Donkey Kong

As the marketing noted, “This isn’t your father’s Donkey Kong!” He is, in fact, Donkey Kong Jr., all grown up. For his 16-bit revival, Donkey Kong was redesigned, with his original creator Shigeru Miyamoto providing Rare with a sketch that included the now-iconic red tie. Mr. Miyamoto also suggested Donkey’s ape-inspired “hand slap” move, which allowed him to defeat nearby enemies and reveal certain secrets. Rare was able to implement the move just weeks before the deadline for the game.

Funky Kong

Funky Kong provides Donkey and Diddy a plane that looks like a barrel to ride to previously visited locations around the island, along with all the bodacious ’90s slang the Donkey dudes can handle! Does this guy even have his pilot’s license? Or is the Funky Barrel flying itself? Whoa…

Diddy Kong

Diddy Kong was initially designed as Rare’s take on Donkey Kong Jr. Nintendo felt the new look was too much of a departure. As Rare was quite attached to their creation, they opted to drop Donkey Kong Jr. altogether and make Diddy Kong a completely original character. Rare passed around a paper with potential names, including Diet DK, DK Lite, Titchy Kong, and Dinky Kong, which is what they eventually settled on. A bit of legal advice led to one final change, and Dinky Kong became Diddy Kong.

Diddy was often described as a Donkey Kong wannabe. His smaller size makes him less powerful than Donkey Kong, but notably faster. Instead of rolling, he uses a cartwheel attack that is just as adept at taking out weaker enemies as it is at rapidly traversing levels.

Cranky Kong

Also known as Donkey Kong Sr., Cranky’s days of kidnapping Pauline and terrorizing Mario and Stanley the Bugman have long since passed. Now he dispenses snarky tips, breaks the fourth wall, and otherwise lives up to his new name. Cranky served as an opportunity for the developers to satirize certain video game tropes, such as the “Notes” section included in the instruction booklet that Cranky doubts anyone actually uses.

Candy Kong

Donkey’s “rumored” love interest manages the save points in *Donkey Kong Country*. Candy did not appear in either sequel for the Super NES, though she did appear in their Game Boy Advance remakes.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

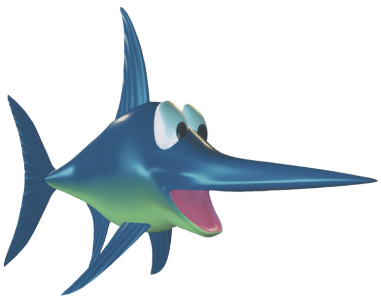
Donkey Kong Country

Animal Buddies

Mario had Yoshi; Donkey Kong had Rambi the Rhino. And Enguarde the Swordfish. And Squawks the Parrot. And many others over the course of the series.

Some animal helpers that didn't make the final cut included a dolphin, an owl that would give players information, a fox that would reveal secrets, snakes that could be used as vines, a giraffe whose long neck would help the Kongs reach high areas, and a flying pig.

Rambi



Enguarde

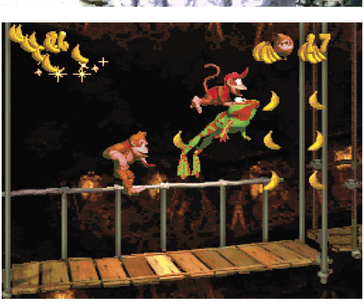
Expresso

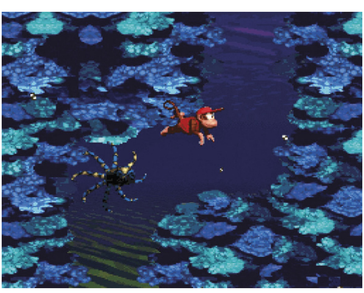
Winky

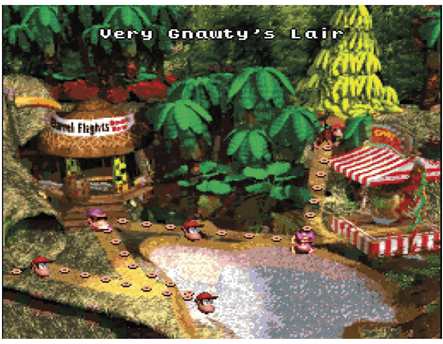
Squawks

Lead designer Gregg Mayles has openly referred to the backgrounds in *Donkey Kong Country* as "the bane of the project." Unlike other games of the era, which used repeating single-screen patterns to create lengthy backgrounds, Rare wanted the environments to feel organic. A painstaking process of splicing background elements together was used to retain as much of the 3D model quality as possible while disguising the repeating elements.

The game features several environment types, each one introducing an entirely new visual style. Jungles, underwater caves, snowy peaks, industrial facilities, ancient temples, and a pirate ship—Rare worked tirelessly until the very last moment to fit as much creativity and variety into the end product as possible.



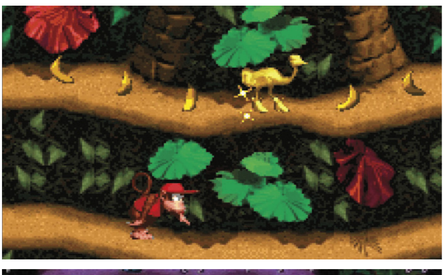




Boss: Very Gnawty

Featured Level: Jungle Hijinxs

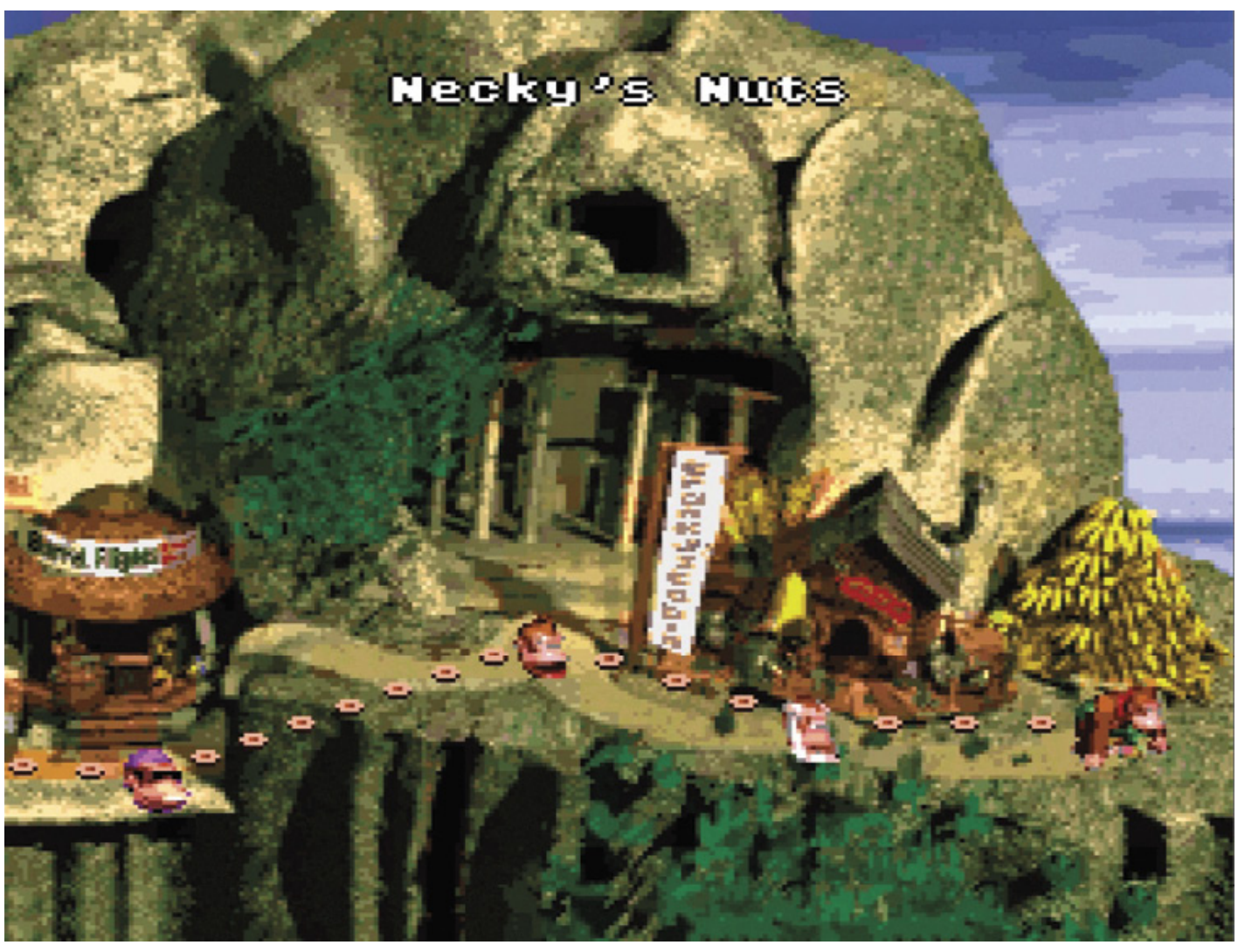
Jungle Hijinxs is the prime example of a great *Donkey Kong Country* level, and a great way to start off any platforming game. It's simple, but not mundane. It immediately encourages exploration and rewards experimentation, as there are several secrets hidden throughout. The stage is quick to demonstrate some of the cool things players likely saw in commercials, such as riding Rambi, shooting around in barrels, and balancing on top of a steel keg.



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Donkey Kong Country

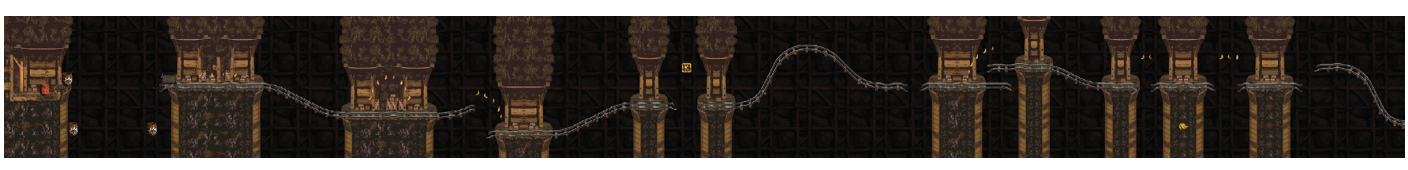
Monkey Mines

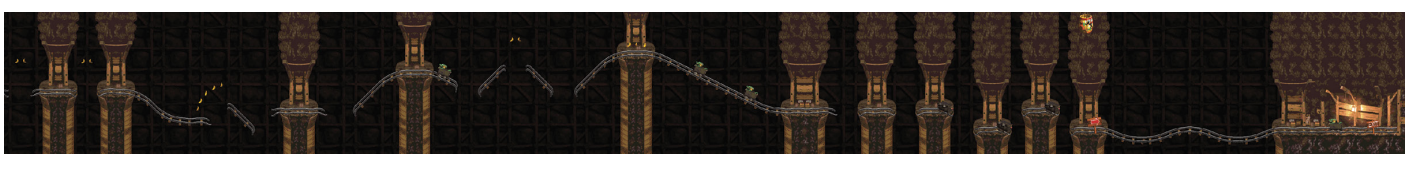


Boss: Master Necky

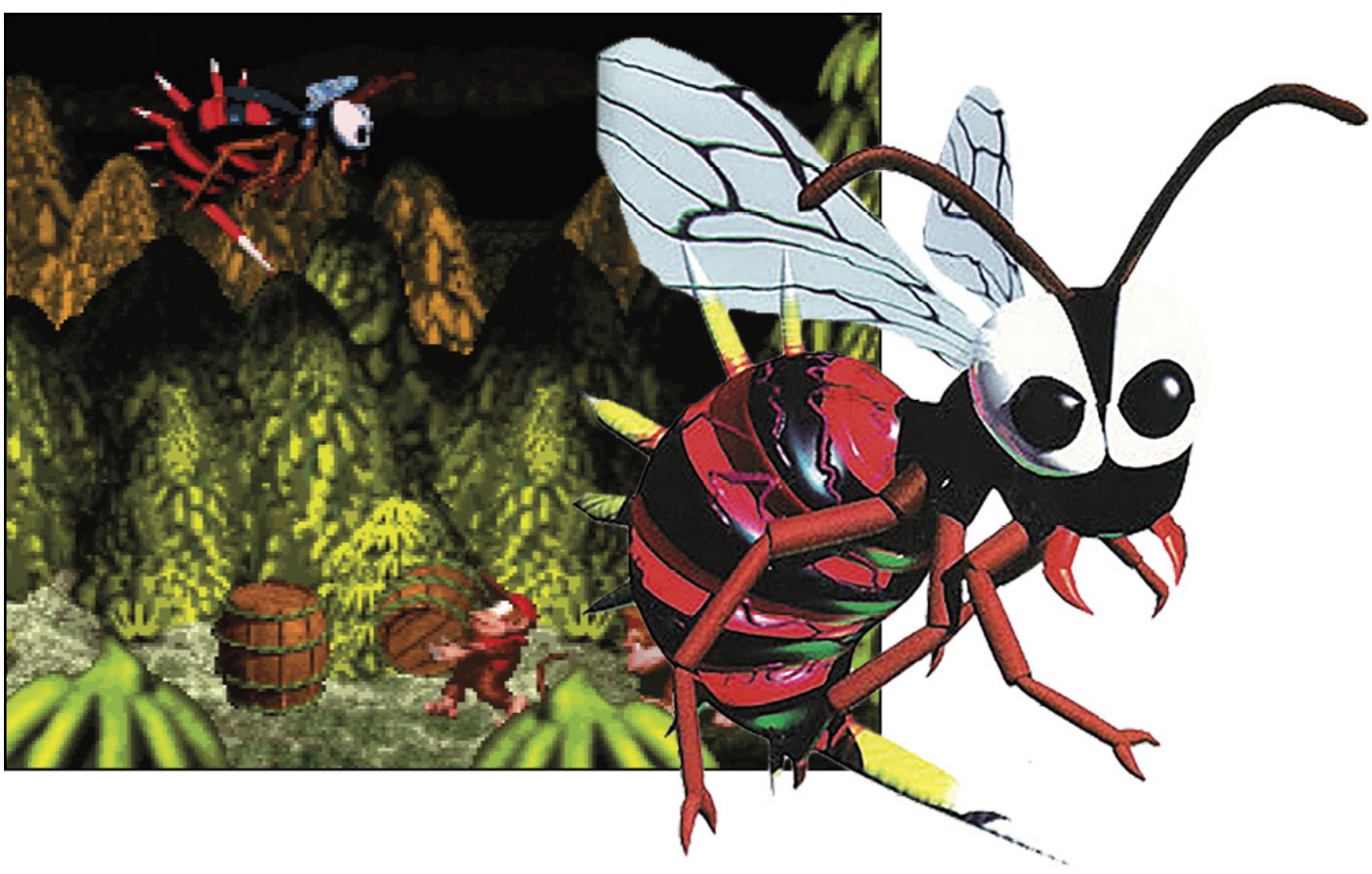
Featured Level: Mine Cart Carnage

Donkey Kong Country's variety ensures there's never a dull moment. Just when things might start to feel too familiar, BAM! Mine carts! Just ignore the impossible physics and enjoy this *Indiana Jones*-inspired rollercoaster ride.





Boss: Queen B.



Featured Level: Tree Top Town

Tree Top Town's Endor-inspired design provides some interesting world-building for the *Donkey Kong Country* universe. It's nature-heavy architecture provides a stark contrast to the smoky, industrial factories of the Kremling hoard.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

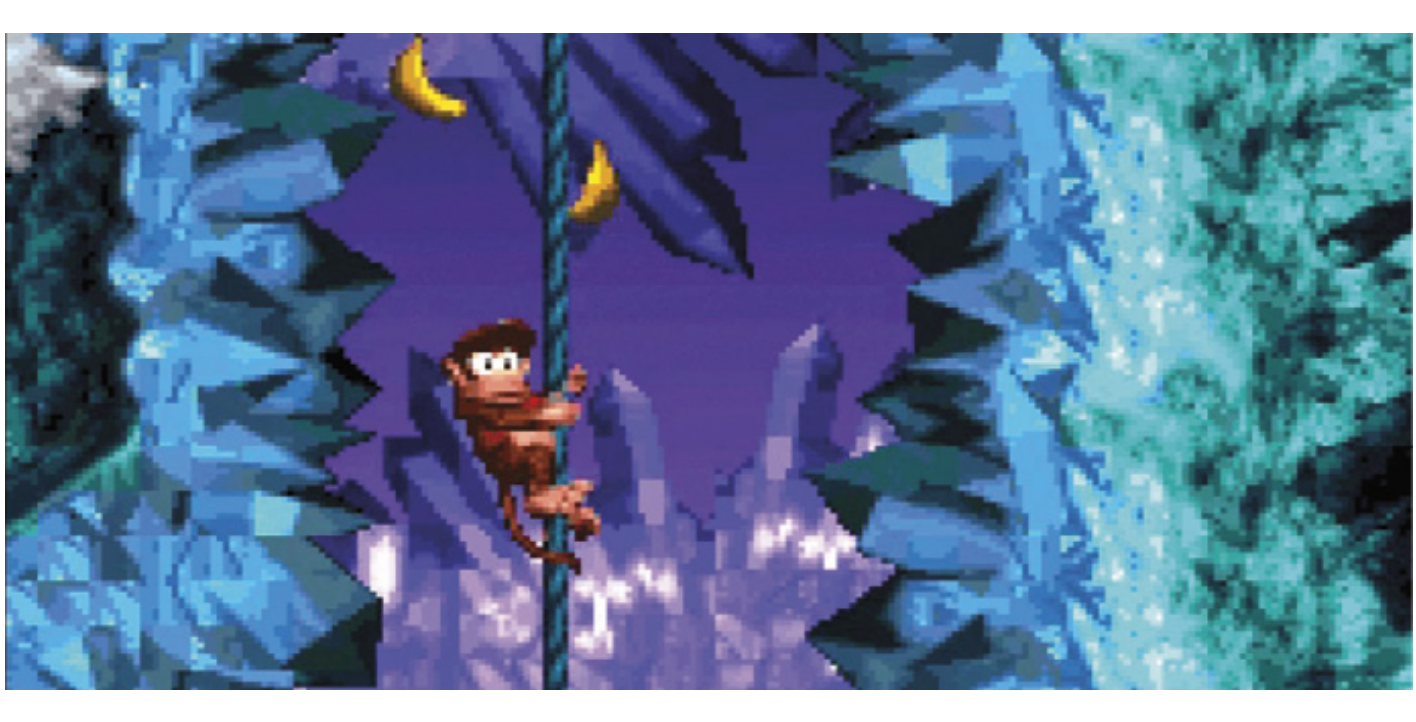
Donkey Kong Country

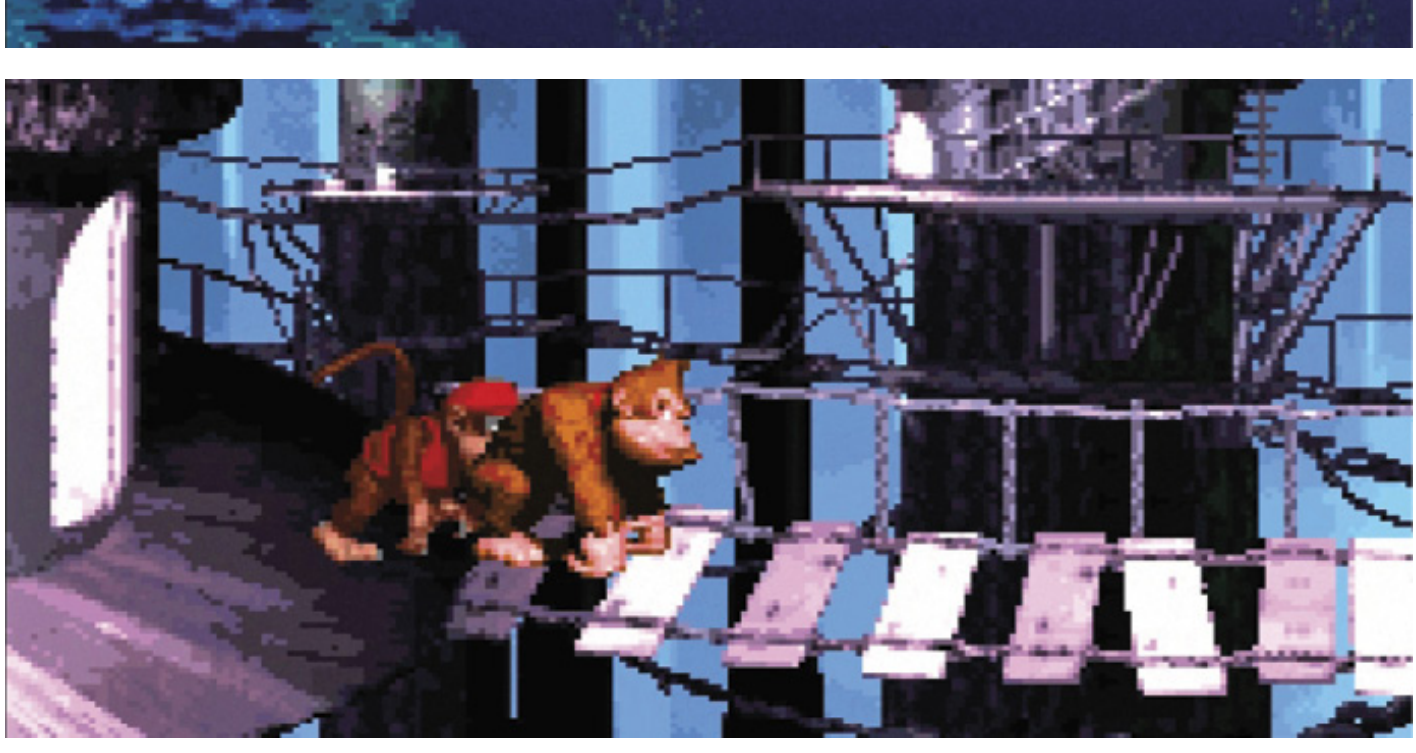
Gorilla Glacier

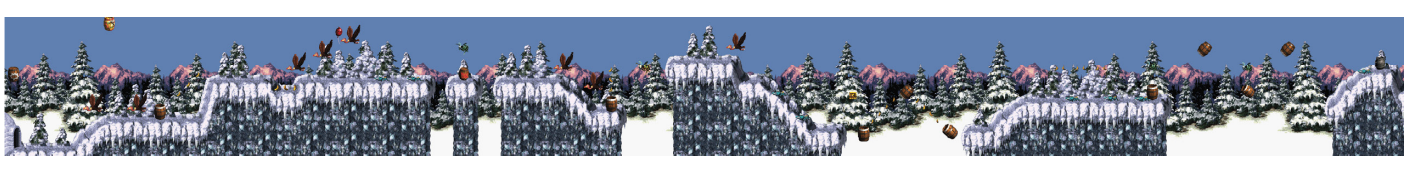
Boss: Really Gnawty

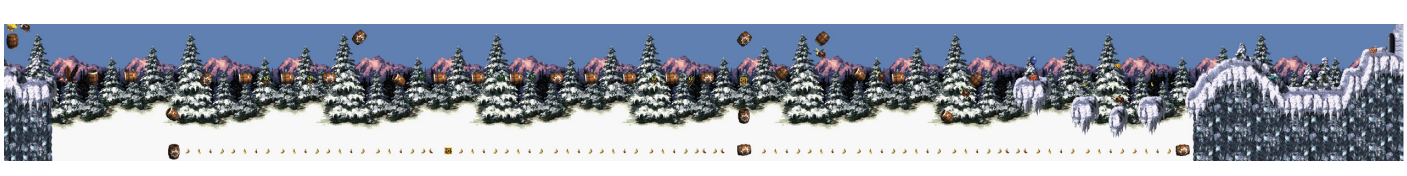
Featured Level: Snow Barrel Blast

New locations continue to provide new eye candy and fresh challenges. Jumps are trickier, snowstorms obscure vision, and the icy ground provides less traction. But hauling primate butt quickly through tricky levels like Snow Barrel Blast feels even more rewarding, and for the less daring explorer there's a secret barrel that bypasses half of the level.









Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

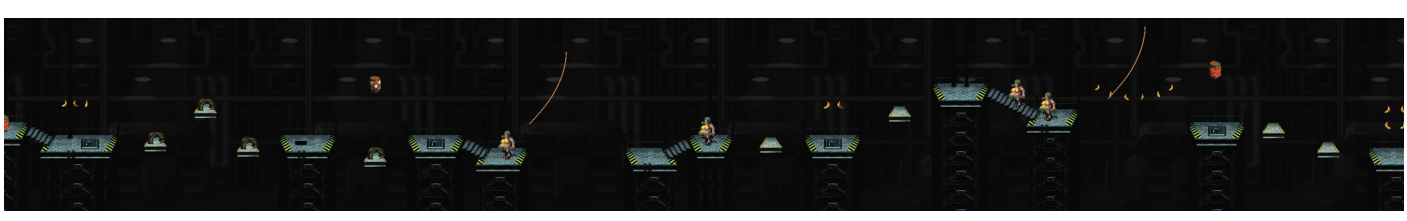
Donkey Kong Country

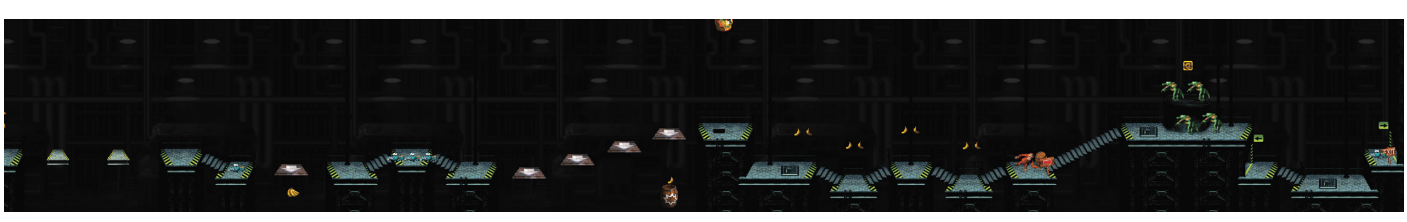
Kremkroc Industries, Inc.

Boss: Dumb Drum

Featured Level: Blackout Basement

At first glance this stage may not seem particularly troublesome, but there's a catch: the lights flicker on and off, meaning memory is just as important as quick reflexes. Try doing this one without stopping!





Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

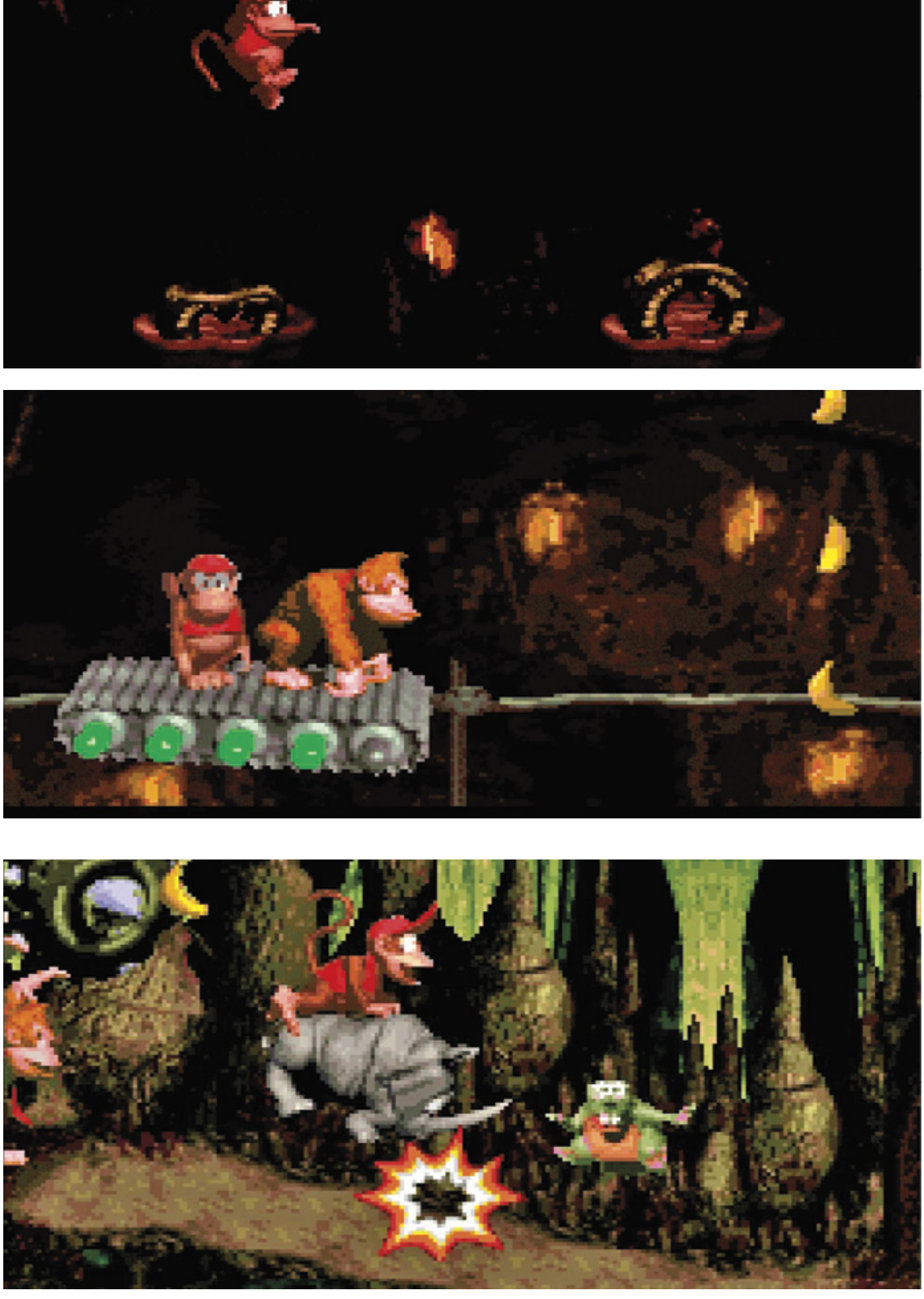
Donkey Kong Country

Chimp Caverns

Boss: Master Necky, Snr.

Featured Level: Tanked Up Trouble

One of the slower levels in the game, this endurance test requires the Kongs to keep their moving platform fueled as it transports them through the area and its various obstacles.



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Donkey Kong Country

Gangplank Galleon

Boss: King K. Rool

The showdown against King K. Rool at Gangplank Galleon is quite a challenge. Just when the Kongs thought they've won and the (fake) credits start to roll, K. Rool comes back for a couple more rounds. Tricky!

1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

Donkey Kong Country was known as *Super Donkey Kong* in Japan!

2 REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Super Donkey Kong featured dozens of alterations to make the game less difficult, including the removal of certain enemies and the addition of extra barrels or Items. Other changes included the removal of three overturned carts in Mine Cart Carnage and the ability to defeat Rockkroks with Donkey Kong's hand slap.

3 KREMLING KREW

The Kremling enemies share a resemblance with certain characters from another of Rare's popular series, *Battletoads*.

4 KLAPTRAP & ZINGER VARIANTS

The Klaptrap and Zinger enemies have unused palette swaps that were locked away in the game's code. Like with most unused assets in Super NES games, some of these were utilized in the Game Boy Advance ports.

5 BOXY BEGINNINGS

Though the tech demo of a computer-generated boxer that helped Rare snag the Donkey Kong deal never became a game itself, a champion boxer was included in Rare's fighting game, *Killer Instinct*, which used the same Advanced Computer Modeling techniques as *Donkey Kong Country*.

Donkey Kong himself later appeared as a secret opponent in *Punch-Out!!* for the Wii.

6 SILICON FURNACE, INCORPORATED

Heat from all of the high-end machinery required to create *Donkey Kong Country*'s 3D graphics turned Rare's offices into a sauna during the summer. They suffered through it as long as the computers themselves weren't damaged.

7 DKC TV

A CG-animated *Donkey Kong Country* television show aired its 40 episodes in the US from 1997 to 2000. A few notable changes from the games include renaming DK Isle to Kongo Bongo Island, and a complete revamp of the Candy Kong character.

8 SMASH AND KART!

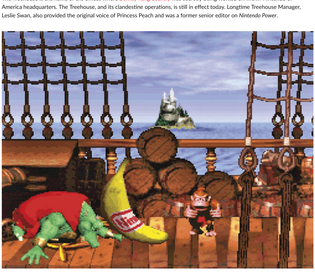
Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong have made numerous appearances in various Nintendo franchises such as *Mario Kart* and *Super Smash Bros.*

9 PRE-DKC

Before it became *Donkey Kong Country*, Rare had conceptualized a few different takes on the *Donkey Kong* property, including games titled *Donkey Kong and the Golden Bananas*, and *Donkey Kong vs. Super Mario*. A puzzle platforming game, *Mario vs. Donkey Kong*, was developed by Nintendo and released for the Game Boy Advance in 2004.

10 TREEHOUSE

The Treehouse is the name of the offices where *Donkey Kong Country* was secretly being worked on within Nintendo of America headquarters. The Treehouse, and its clandestine operations, is still in effect today. Longtime Treehouse Manager, Leslie Swan, also provided the original voice of Princess Peach and was a former senior editor on *Nintendo Power*.



11 BRAND-NAME BANANNERS

The giant bananas awarded for defeating bosses originally featured a well-known brand logo before being replaced by the Nintendo logo.

12 JUNGLE JAPES

The first level of *Donkey Kong Country* was originally named Jungle Japes, but was changed to Jungle Hijinks. Jungle Japes was later used as the first stage of *Donkey Kong 64*, as well as the Donkey Kong arena in *Super Smash Bros. Melee*.

13 IDENTITY CRISIS

King K. Rool was orginally named "Krudd".

14 CRANKY?

Unused lines of dialogue reveal Cranky Kong was considerably less cranky in earlier versions of the game:

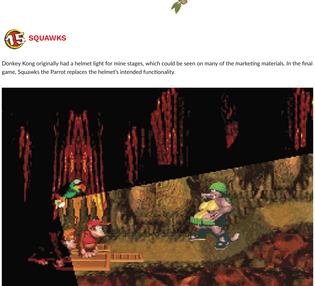
"Diddy boy! Where's Donks?"

"Hey! Can you spare your old poppy a banana?"

"It's about time you visited your frail, old Grandpa!"

15 SQUAWKS

Donkey Kong originally had a helmet light for mine stages, which could be seen on many of the marketing materials. In the final game, Squawks the Parrot replaces the helmet's intended functionality.



16 DK JAMZ

The *Donkey Kong Country* soundtrack was released on CD in 1995 as *DK Jamz*. The tracklist included 50 tracks, though #24-48 were silent.

Donkey Kong Country

Confidential Information

Speedrunner Eazinn

Eazinn has held multiple world records in *Donkey Kong Country* over the years, sometimes beating his own current record within days of setting it. Whether it's an eight-minute Any% playthrough or a full 101% run, Eazinn has done it all. Below you'll find select tips for barreling through *Donkey Kong Country* like the pros!

Basic

Rolling

Rolling is the meat of this game. It's faster than running or jumping and generally does a better job of dispatching enemies and getting over gaps than the jump alone. To sum up *Donkey Kong Country* speedrunning, "Any time not spent rolling is generally time better spent rolling." *DKC* is primarily based around speeding yourself up through tight maneuvering and tricks to gain speed, so rolling as often as possible and using enemies and the terrain to your advantage is key. As such, knowing enemy placement and how different parts of the stage can affect the Kongs' roll is very important.

Advanced

Extended Rolling

Unique to *DKC1* is a technique called extended rolling, which is essentially chaining rolls between enemies together. If you press Y to initiate a roll but let go right away and re-press Y after you have rolled through an enemy, you start another roll. You can theoretically use this technique to chain through enemies infinitely. Extended rolling is a bit tricky at first but is something that you need to master in order to get a good time, as there are extended rolls in most of the stages.

Tire Rolls

Rolling on tires is also an advanced technique. Because of how tires are programmed, trying to roll off one can result in death if you don't know exactly how to roll off a tire. Where you land in relation to the tire is extremely important to determine when you should start rolling; inputting a roll a little too early or a little too late can result in death and ultimately kill your run.

Expert

Jumproll

The jumproll is a glitch where you initiate a roll on the same frame that you bounce on an enemy. It causes the game to send your Kong rolling through the air horizontally at running speed, bypassing entire stages. I have spent countless hours on each individual jumproll trying to get the best setups and best consistency possible, but they still kill most of my runs. In the course of the run there are seven jumprolls, saving a little over two minutes altogether. Getting all of them in one run is like winning the lottery. Jumprolls are a cool-looking trick and really fun to pull off, but not recommended for new runners.

Donkey Kong Country quickly became the best-selling non-Mario game on the Super NES. Its sequels both earned spots in the top 10 best-selling titles as well, solidifying the newly minted universe and Rare's work in Nintendo history. The series dealt a swift and definitive blow to any lingering competition at the time, and Donkey and Diddy have gone on to have many more adventures since their 16-bit days.

Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy's Kong Quest

1995, Super NES

Donkey Kong Country 3: Dixie Kong's Double Trouble!

1996, Super NES

Donkey Kong Country received two sequels for the Super NES. Diddy and his girlfriend, Dixie, star in the second game, while Dixie and her cousin Kiddy Kong are on a mission to rescue Donkey and Diddy in the third. Dixie and Kiddy introduce new gameplay mechanics, such as Dixie's helicopter hair ability, which allows her to float short distances.

The sequels were received very well, with certain members of Rare even stating they felt they were better games than the original. Game Boy Advance ports for the entire trilogy were released with minor tweaks, as is tradition.

Donkey Kong Land Series

1995-1997, Game Boy

The Donkey Kong Country trilogy received a sister series on the Game Boy. Also developed by Rare, each game was modeled after the Donkey Kong Country title released the year prior, but featured all-new stages and plot points. Like its console counterpart, *Donkey Kong Land*'s visuals pushed the Game Boy beyond what anyone had believed the handheld was capable of.

Diddy Kong Racing

1997, Nintendo 64

Diddy Kong Racing was Rare's take on the kart formula popularized by *Super Mario Kart* and *Mario Kart 64*. Unique features included an Adventure Mode with a *Super Mario 64*-esque hub that required a set amount of golden balloons to unlock doors leading to new races or boss battles. Each of the eight playable characters could choose between different vehicle types (kart, hovercraft, or plane) for each race. This concept would later be introduced in the *Mario Kart* series.

Diddy Kong Racing marked the first appearance of Rare's Banjo and Conker characters, both of whom would go on to star in their own games for the Nintendo 64.

A version of *Diddy Kong Racing* was released for the Nintendo DS in 2007. A sequel, *Donkey Kong Racing*, was in development for the Nintendo GameCube but was ultimately canceled.

Donkey Kong 64

1999, Nintendo 64

Rare's Donkey Kong swan song brought the unique elements introduced in the *Country* trilogy into a fully 3D adventure. *Donkey Kong 64* featured five different playable Kongs, each with their own unique abilities and items to collect.

The game was the first to require the Nintendo 64 Expansion Pak, which increased the console's available memory for bigger games and improved graphics.

Donkey Konga Series

2003-2005, Nintendo GameCube

Developed by Namco's *Taiko Drum Master* team, *Donkey Konga* was a series of music rhythm games that used special peripherals called DK Bongos. Both licensed songs and music from popular Nintendo games were included among the playable tracks.

Donkey Kong Jungle Beat

2005, Nintendo GameCube

Combining Donkey Konga's music-based gameplay and Donkey Kong Country's platforming mechanics, *Donkey Kong Jungle Beat* was the best of both worlds. Using the DK Bongos to control Donkey Kong, players progressed through levels attempting to keep their combo counter as high as possible.

Donkey Kong Jungle Beat received a Wii port in 2009, and is referenced as both a stage and Donkey Kong's Final Smash attack in the *Super Smash Bros.* series.

Donkey Kong Barrel Blast

2007, Wii

Donkey Kong Barrel Blast was a racing game somewhat similar to Mario Kart. It was developed with the intention of utilizing the DK Bongos, but was later switched to the Wii Remote and Nunchuk when the GameCube version was canceled.

Donkey Kong Country Returns

2010, Wii

Ten years after *Donkey Kong 64*, Metroid Prime developer Retro Studios revived the series on the Wii. As was the case with *Metroid*, Retro's take on the classic franchise was extremely well-received. Donkey Kong Country Returns featured cooperative gameplay and the same iconic 2D platforming from the 16-bit days, but with actual 3D graphics. Retro Studios claimed each level had three times the amount of textures and polygons as many areas in *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption*.

A port, Donkey Kong Country Returns 3D, was released for the Nintendo 3DS in 2013.

Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze

2014, Wii U

Retro Studios followed up their success on the Wii with Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze for the Wii U. New playable characters were added, including Dixie and—for the first time ever—Cranky Kong. Their unique abilities were required to collect every item in the game, similar to *Donkey Kong 64*.

Donkey Kong Country

Donkey Kong Country Kredits

Head Programmer

C Sutherland

Technical Programmer

B Gunn

Additional Programming

M Wilson

Ancillary Software

C Stamper

C Tilston

M Betteridge

O Norton

M McLean

Characters

S Mayles

K Bayliss

Objects

M Stevenson

Additional Backgrounds

A Smith

Graphics Manipulation

C Peil

Additional Graphics

N Crook

Music/Sound

D Wise

E Fischer

R Beanland

Game Testing

H Ward

G Richards

J Stamper Jr

J Hastie

H Sterchi

I Marshall

R Richardson

A Williams

T Harman Jr

Additional Testing

S Hochberg

E Hochberg

S Austin

Manual & Text

D Owsen

Scheduling

S Farmer

Support

T Kristensen

S Stinson

H Tanaka

C Stamper

L Stamper

Hardware

P Cox

J Rogowski

Special Thanks

Mr Yamauchi

M Arakawa

G Takeda

S Yamashiro

J Hochberg

A Harman

K Lobb

Original Donkey Kong Creator

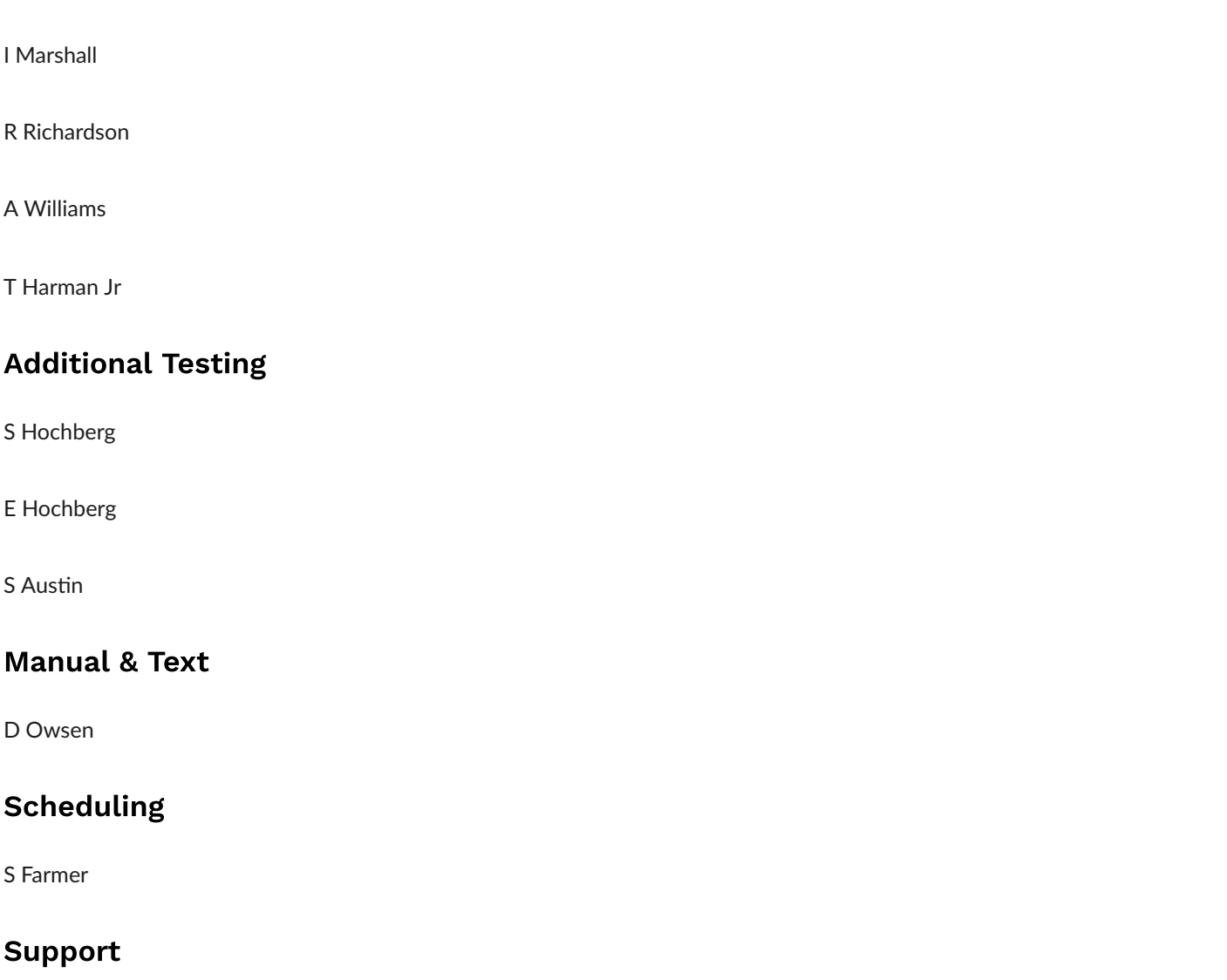
S Miyamoto

Game Design

G Mayles

Game Director

T Stamper



Super Metroid

The Metroid Menace

DEVELOPER

Nintendo IRD, Intelligent Systems

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: March 19, 1994

NA: April 18, 1994

PAL: July 28, 1994

BROKEN PEACE

The galaxy once enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity. Trade lines were open, the citizens were happy and the Galactic Federation kept a watchful eye over the planets.

Not long ago, that peace was broken by a startling discovery.

THE DAWN OF THE METROIDS

On a routine survey mission of the planet SR388, the crew of a Galactic Federation vessel discovered a new airborne life form and gave it the name “Metroid.” These creatures, which could engulf other living beings and take away their energy, proved to be strong and prolific. After just a few seconds of Beta-Ray bombardment, a single Metroid became two Metroids, and then four. Several Metroid specimens were gathered so that the survey vessel crew could take them to Galactic Federation Headquarters for further examination.

As the crew sped towards headquarters, they were ambushed by space pirates from the planet Zebes. The pirates stole the Metroids and took them to their home planet, where the planet-leading Mother Brain created a Metroid force.

ENTER SAMUS

Bounty hunter Samus Aran was commissioned by the Galactic Federation to eliminate the space pirates and do away with the dangerous Metroids. Samus landed on Zebes alone and carried out her mission with speed and precision. After the skirmish on Zebes, a special corps was assigned by the Galactic Federation to destroy the Metroids on SR388. That corps was never heard from again. The Supreme Council gave Samus the job to fly to SR388 and do what the special corps could not do—make the Metroids extinct.

RETURN TO SR388

The Metroids on SR388 were more advanced than the creatures on Zebes. These monsters could shed their skins and grow even stronger. Samus worked deep below the surface and blasted all of the Metroids in her path. Her final victory was against the enormous Metroid Queen. When the queen was defeated, Samus discovered a Metroid egg which hatched before her eyes. Even this hardened bounty hunter could not destroy the Metroid larva. When the larva sensed Samus’ presence, it clung to her as though it had found its mother. Samus packed up the Metroid larva and took it with her to the Space Science Academy on the Galactic Federation Space Colony where scientists could study the creature and understand its special organic structure.

A NEW DISCOVERY

The Science Academy scientists found out that the energy-producing properties of the Metroid could benefit humankind. Their report suggested that the Metroids may have originally been created for peaceful purposes.

Just when it seemed peace and order had been restored, Samus received an emergency directive from the Galactic Federation:

EMERGENCY! EMERGENCY!

RETURN IMMEDIATELY TO THE SPACE SCIENCE ACADEMY!

When Samus made her way to the research facility, she found the building in ruins and the Metroid larva was nowhere to be found. Out from the darkness came a group of Zebesian space pirates and their leader, Ridley, who had the Metroid larva in tow. The pirates fled to a rebuilt planet Zebes and Samus followed them, resolving to finish them off and save the hatching!

Super Metroid

Development

Despite having decades of audiovisual advancements and cinematic inspiration to draw from, few games have crafted a narrative as immediately gripping as *Super Metroid*'s opening moments.

It begins with a cryptic, teasing title crawl: **1994.** Obscured imagery of…something. Bodies? A strange chirping sound can be heard. **Nintendo**. Some sort of machinery. The enigmatic music begins to pick up tempo. **Presents.** Another body… **Metroid 3**. The camera focuses on the source of the chirping—a tiny Metroid enclosed in a glass case—then pulls back, revealing the entire scene as the large amber gradient logo appears at the top: **Super Metroid**.

The familiar *Metroid* title theme begins, but it's slightly different than you remember. Everything is different; it's darker and foreboding. The opening titles are colored a blood red, subtly indicating players should expect a very different experience than the typically lighter fare from the House of N. It's somewhat easy to overlook given the nature of video games, but there are literally corpses on the title screen of this game. This *Nintendo* game. Human corpses in a first-party Nintendo product, let alone within the first few seconds, is a rarity even to this day.

At this point your 23-year-younger self hasn't even touched the controller yet, but younger (or possibly nonexistent) you knows you're in for a ride. What follows is essentially the *Swordfish* of video game opening acts, complete with a boss battle and a self-destruct sequence, all within the span of some modern games' initial loading times. Just the music that plays over Samus' retelling of the previous two games is chill-inducing. You can hear it in your head right now, can't you?

Writer/director Yoshio Sakamoto likens *Super Metroid*'s presentation to a silent film. After the prologue, which caught players up on the events of the first two games and tied the trilogy together, the developers took a minimalist approach to the story. The music and sound design evoke emotion and atmosphere, while the game's environments build a growing sense of isolation.

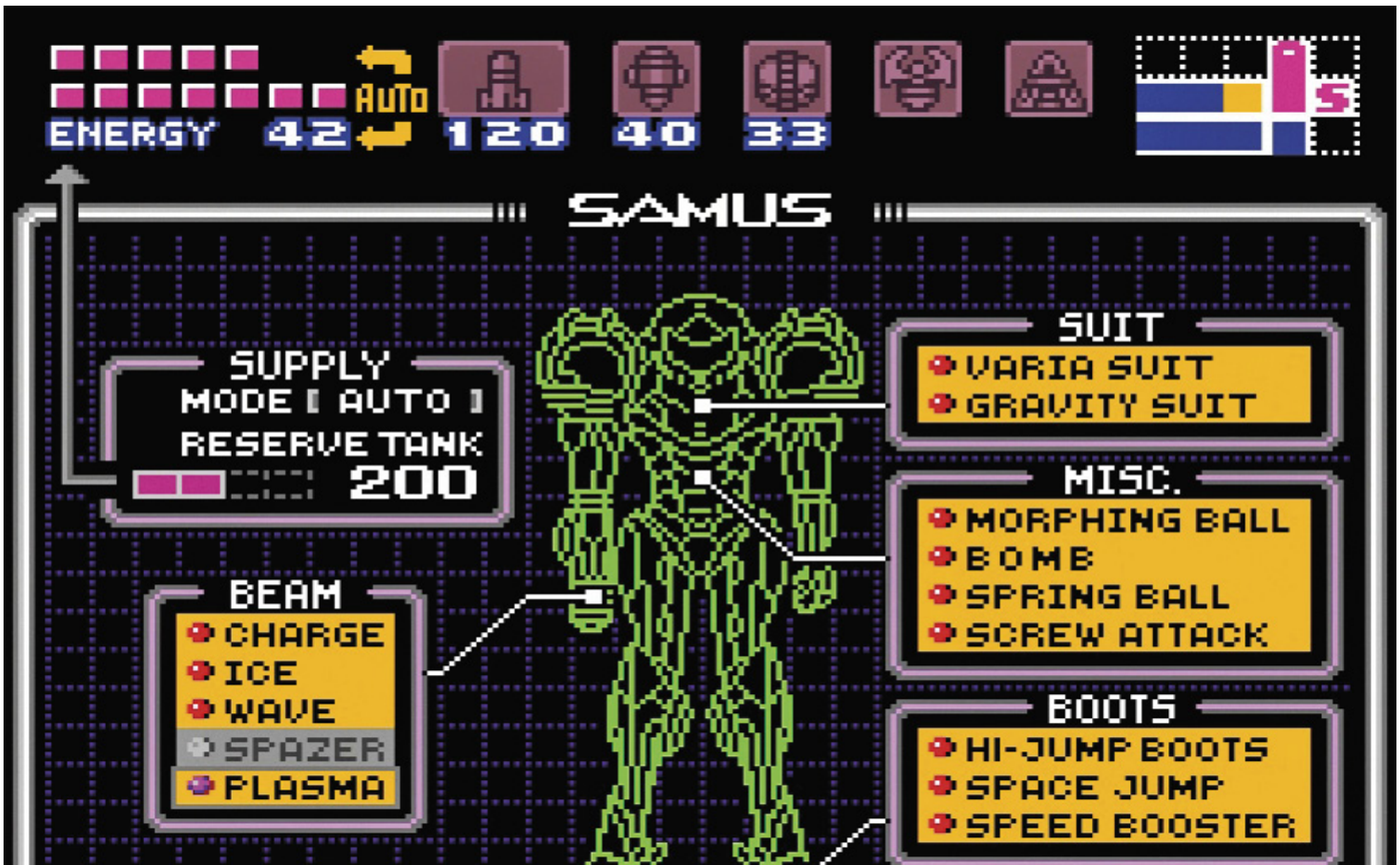
While the storytelling was modeled after the dialogue-free films of the early 1900s, *Super Metroid* strived to push the limits of cinematic video games in every other way. The high-quality audio and visuals were so detailed and extensive that the game required a 24 Mbit cartridge—the largest Super NES game yet. The developers were deliberately trying to make a movie, but for a home console.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Metroid

Samus

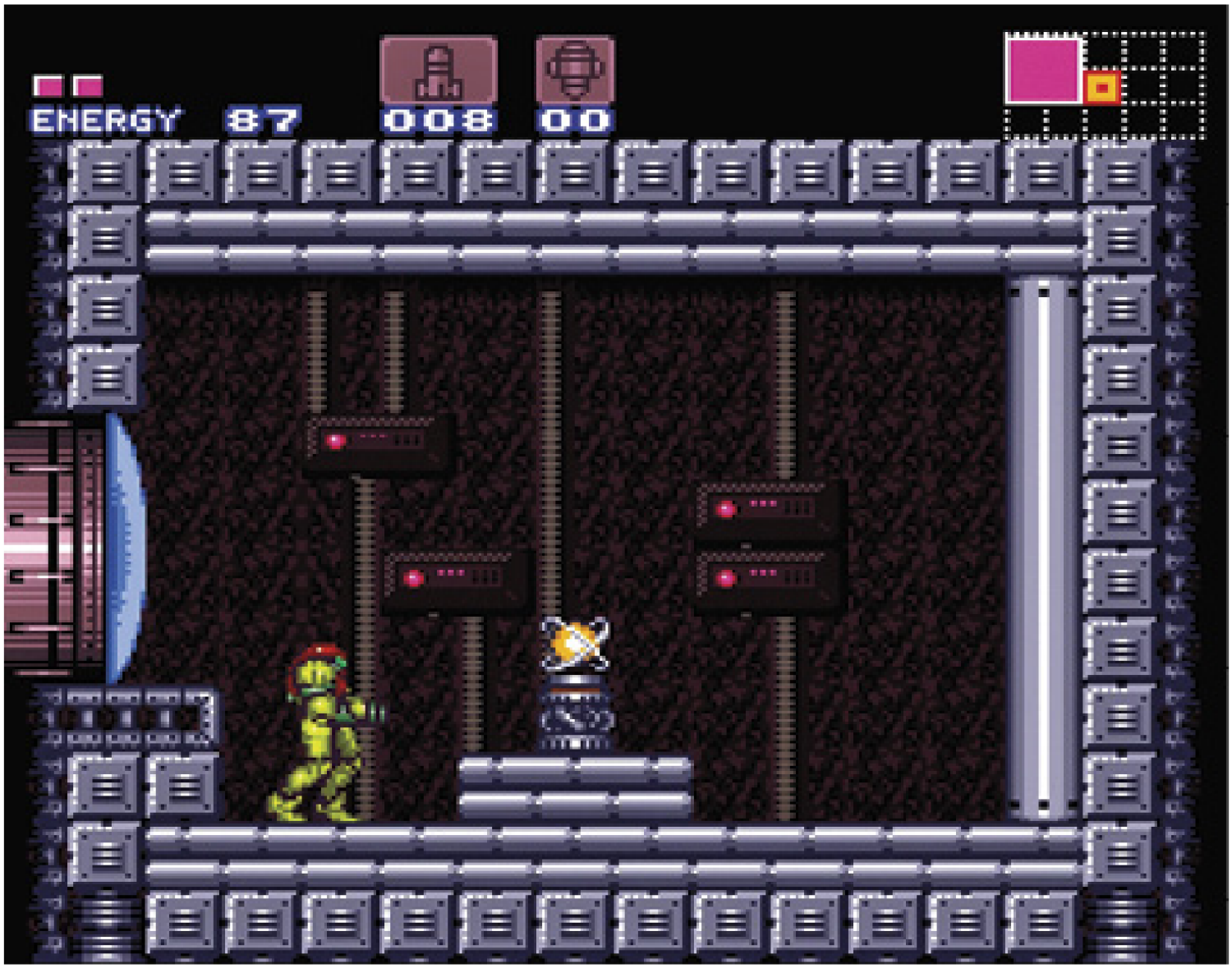
Samus Aran was a native of an Earth colony before being orphaned by a Space Pirate raid. She was adopted by the wise and mysterious Chozo, an ancient and technologically advanced alien race. Infused with Chozo DNA and raised on the planet Zebes to become a warrior, Samus eventually became a renowned galactic bounty hunter.

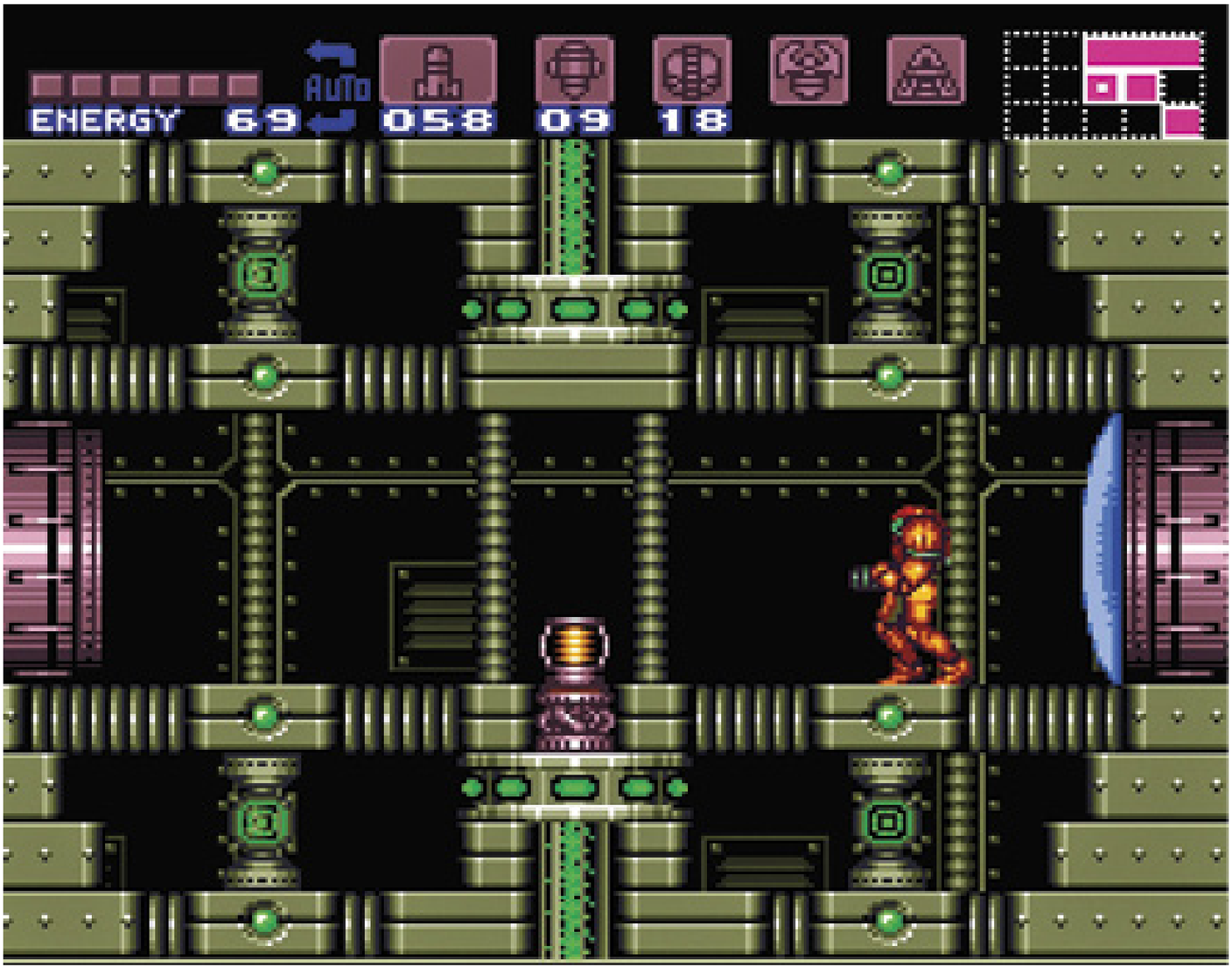


Her cybernetic Power Suit armor was designed by the Chozo, and can be upgraded by assimilating ancient Chozo artifacts. Although it's not shown in *Super Metroid*, the Power Suit is not removed like a traditional suit of armor, but rather, Samus can dematerialize and summon it from within herself at will. This requires unfathomable concentration and mental energy, made possible only by a lifetime of Chozo training.

Power Suit

A large part of the series' appeal is the constant search for and discovery of new upgrades. Whether it's increasing missile ammo or energy tanks, or finding entirely new weapons and power-ups, *Super Metroid* offers tons of toys to keep gameplay fresh.

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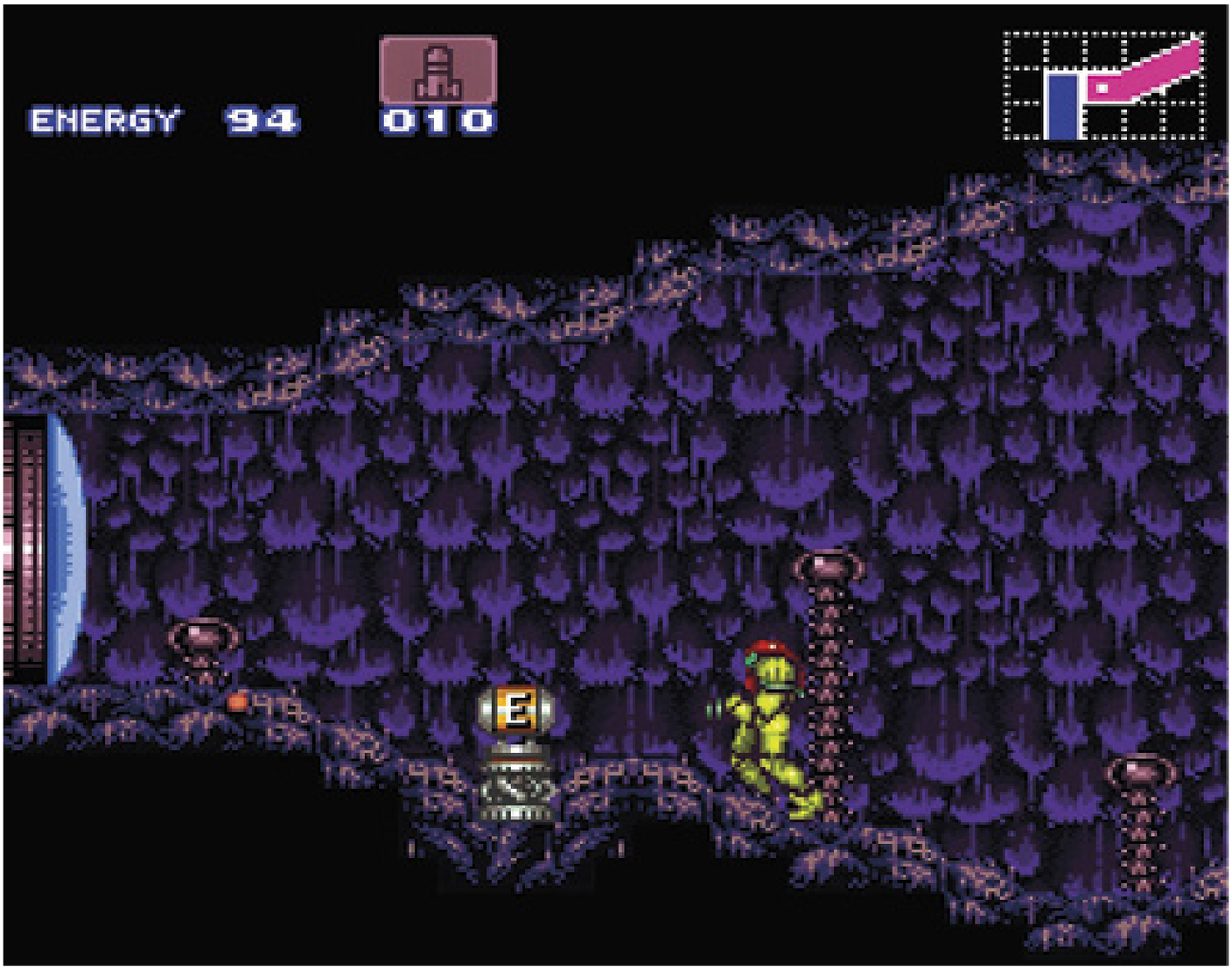
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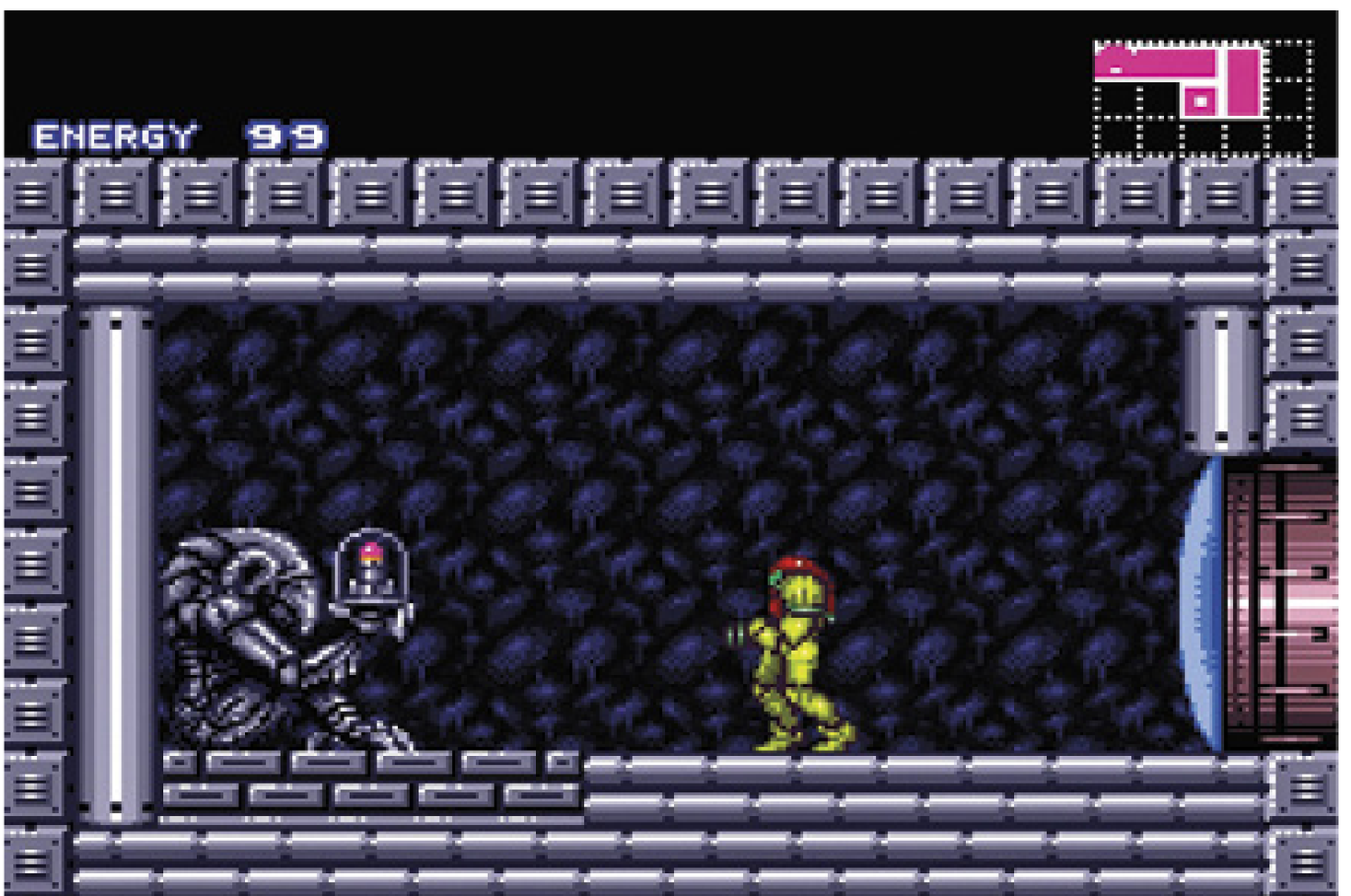
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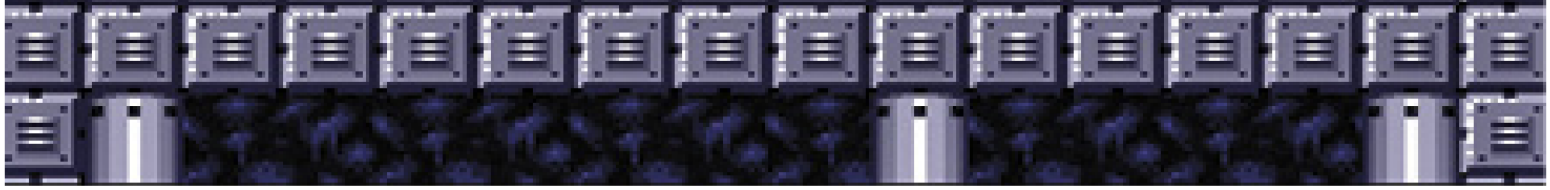

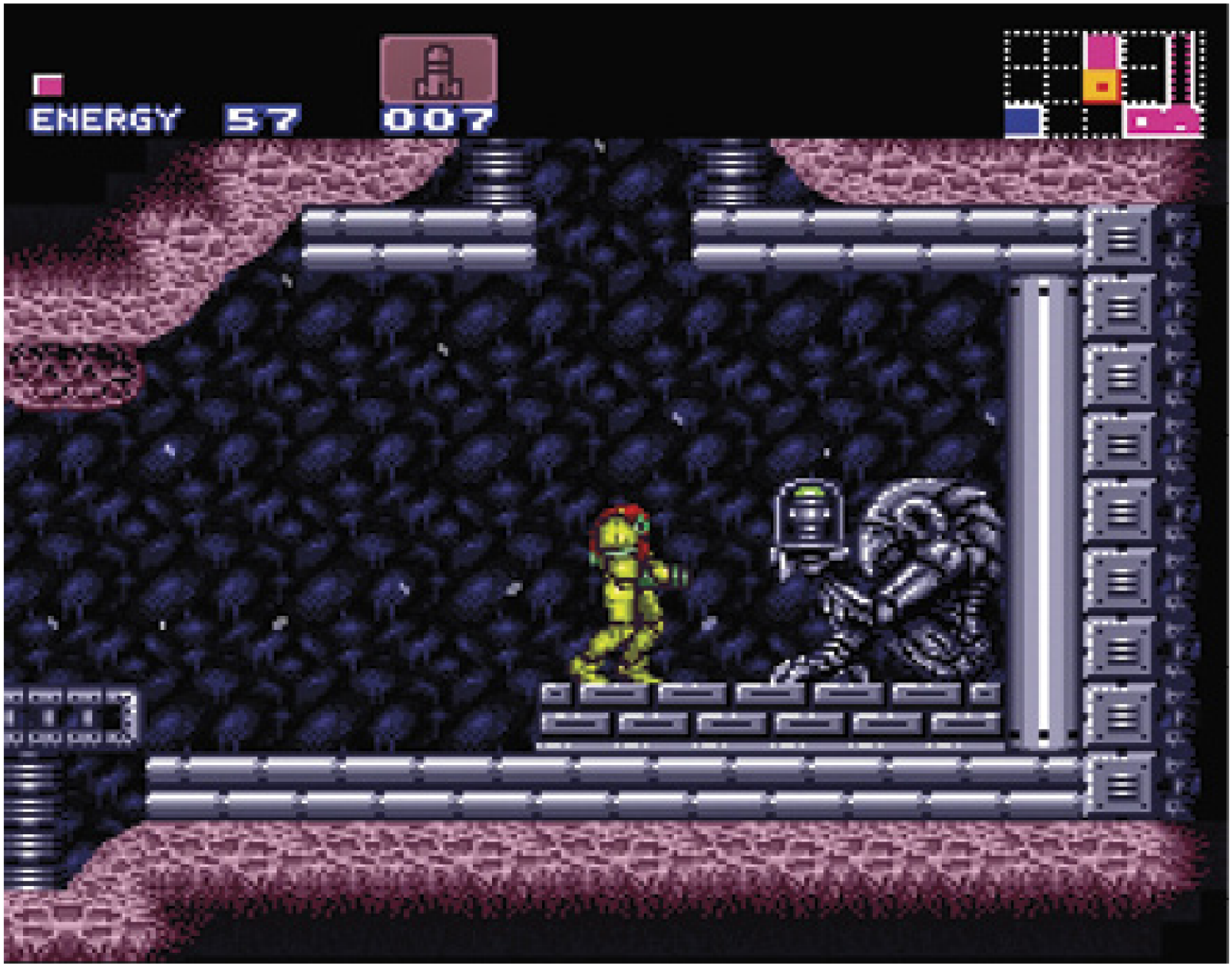
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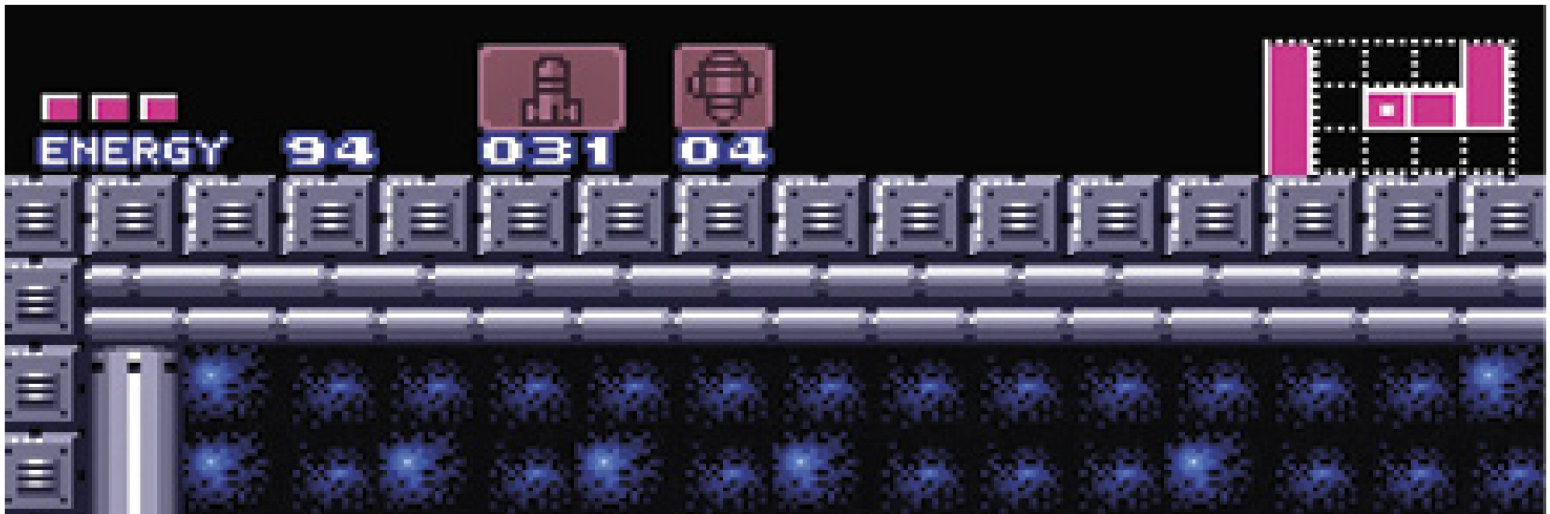
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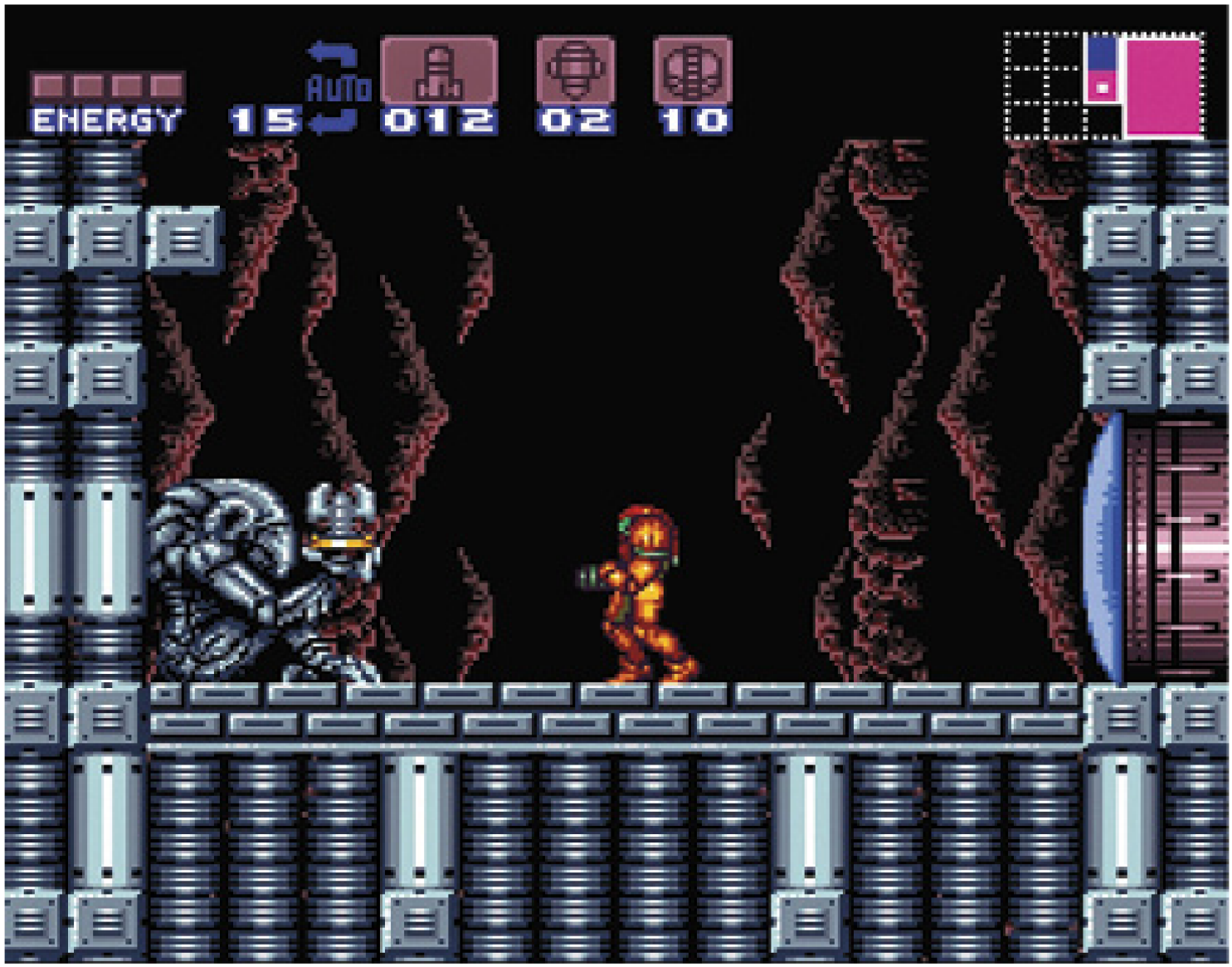
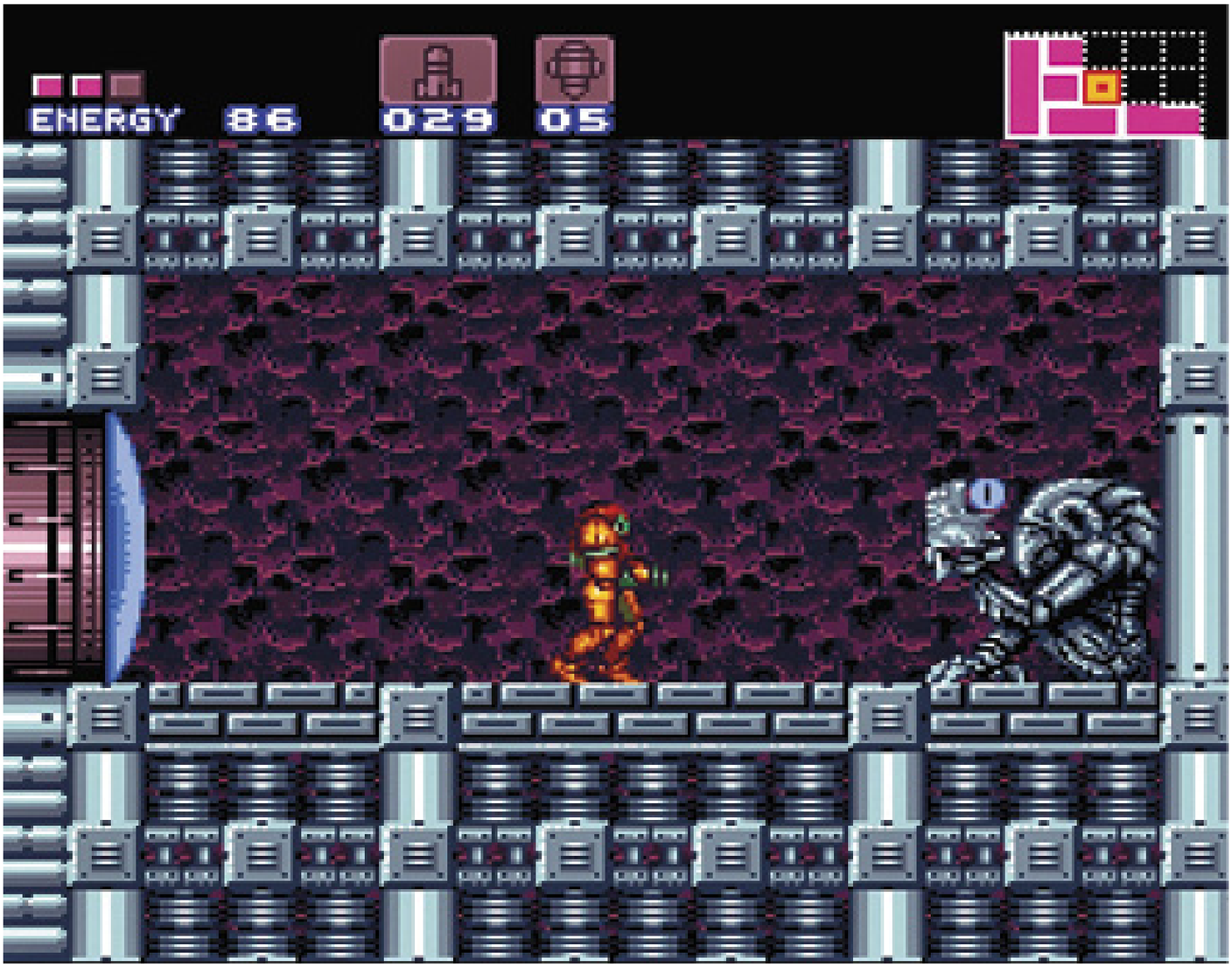
Beams

Samus obtains a large variety of Beam types in *Super Metroid*. Furthermore, Beams can be combined in a number of ways for unique effects.

In order to further utilize Power Bombs, which generally have limited use within the game, special charge beam combos can be discovered with some experimentation. By combining the Charge Beam with the Ice Beam, Wave Beam, Spazer Beam, or Plasma Beam, one of four unique effects occurs.

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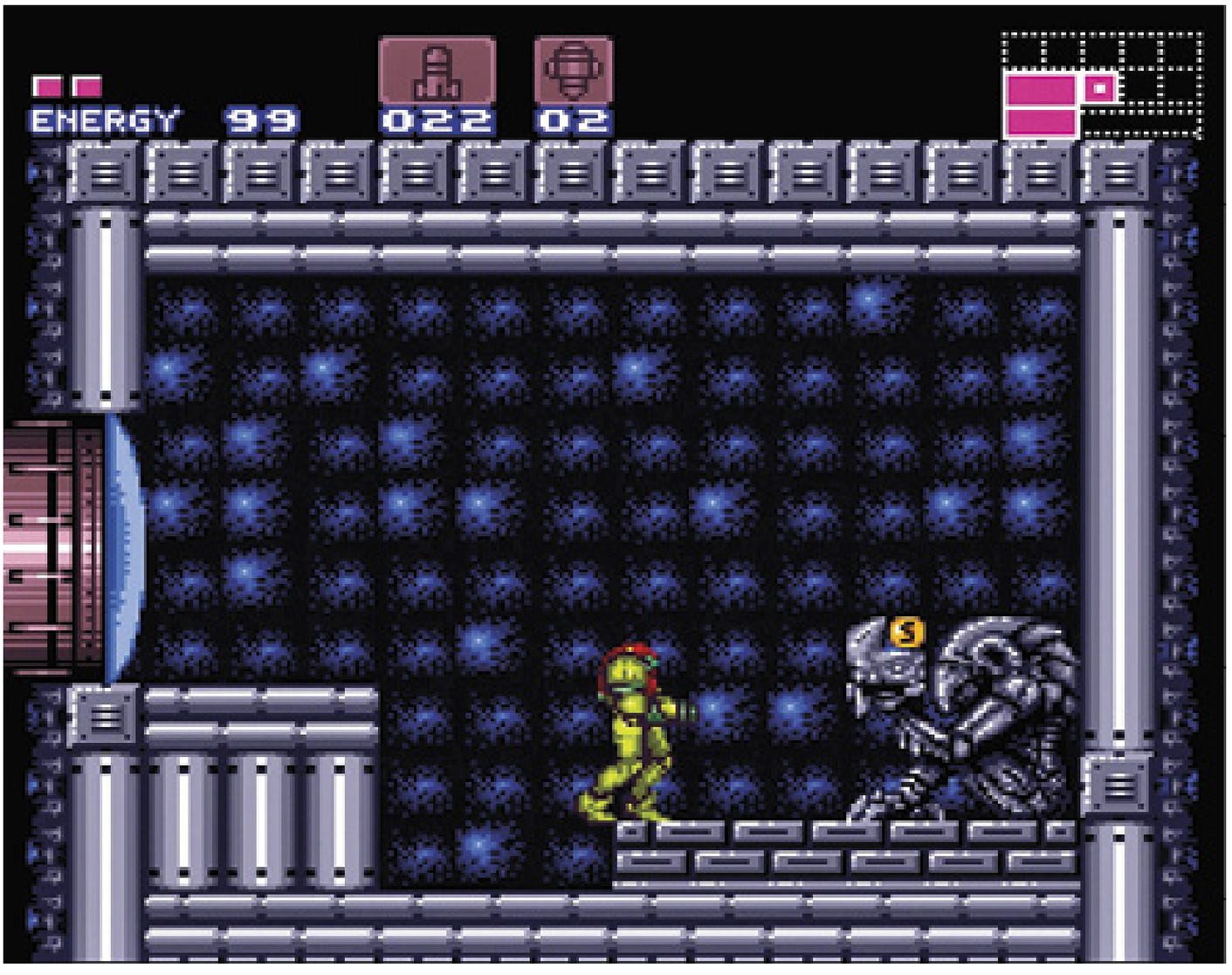
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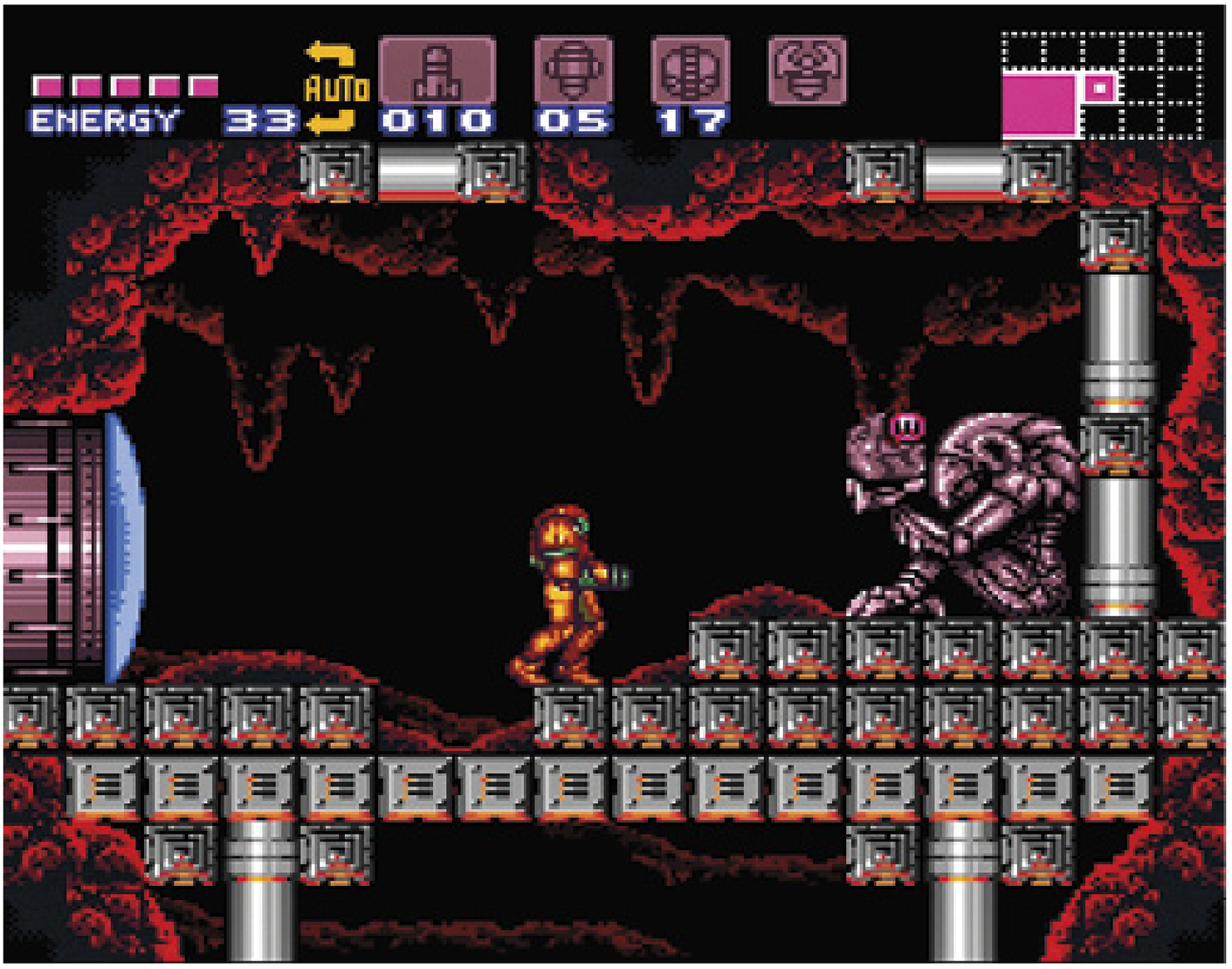
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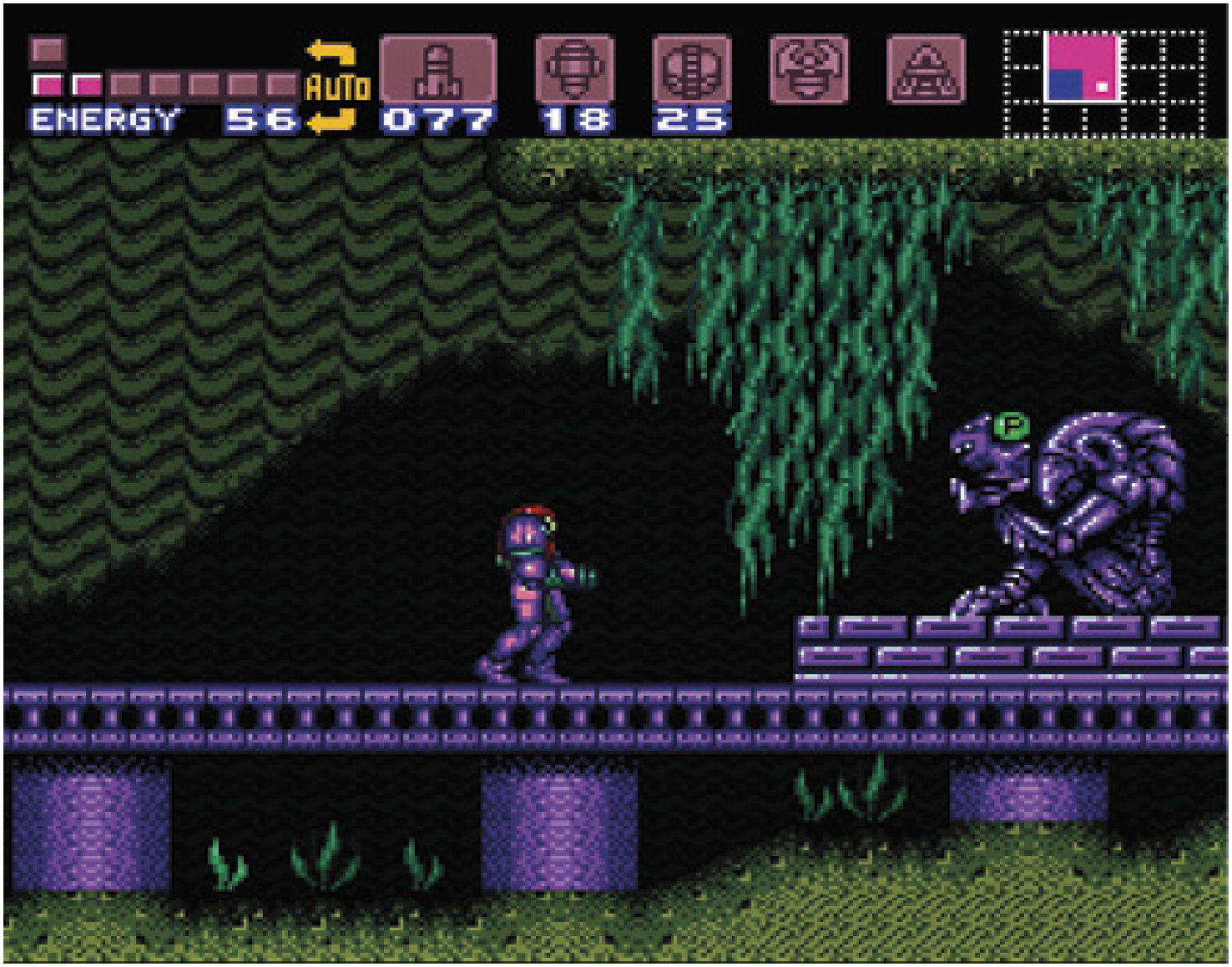
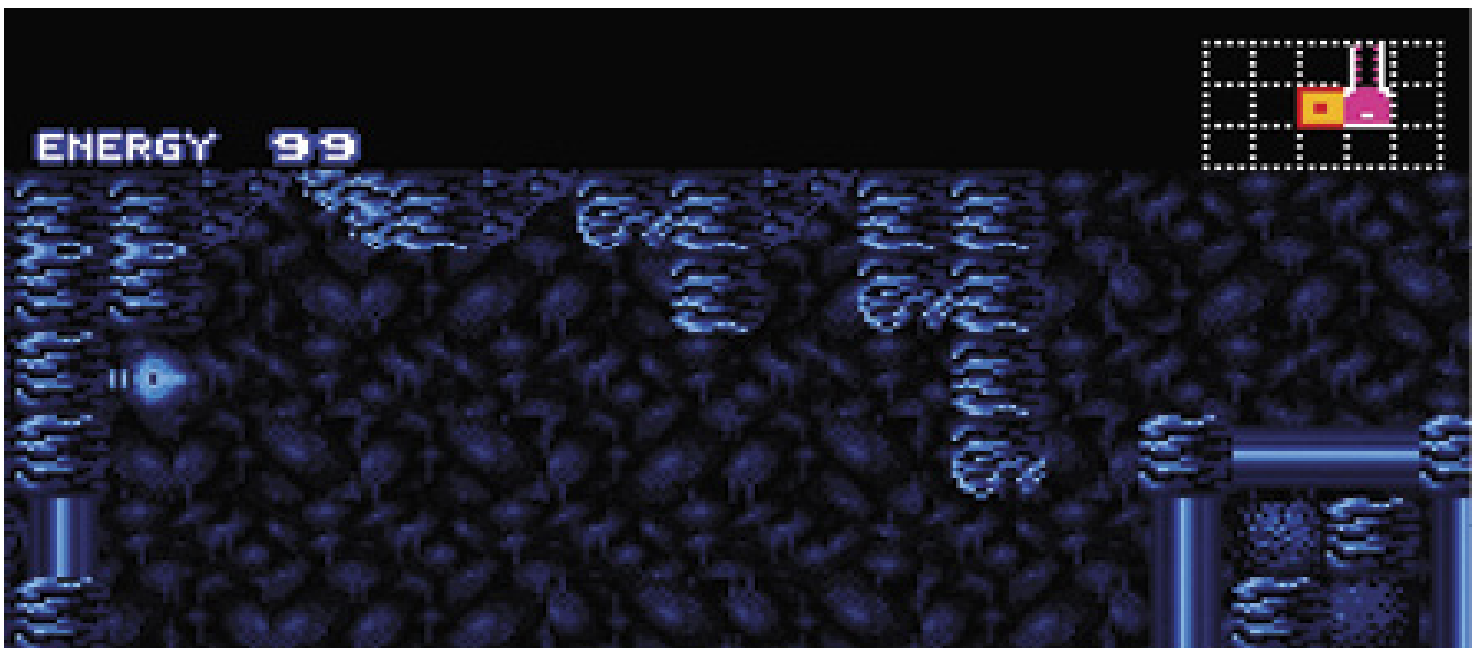


Other Returning Aspects

The Morph Ball was one of the standout aspects of the original *Metroid*. It returns, along with the Screw Attack which provides a destructive element to Samus' jumping capabilities.



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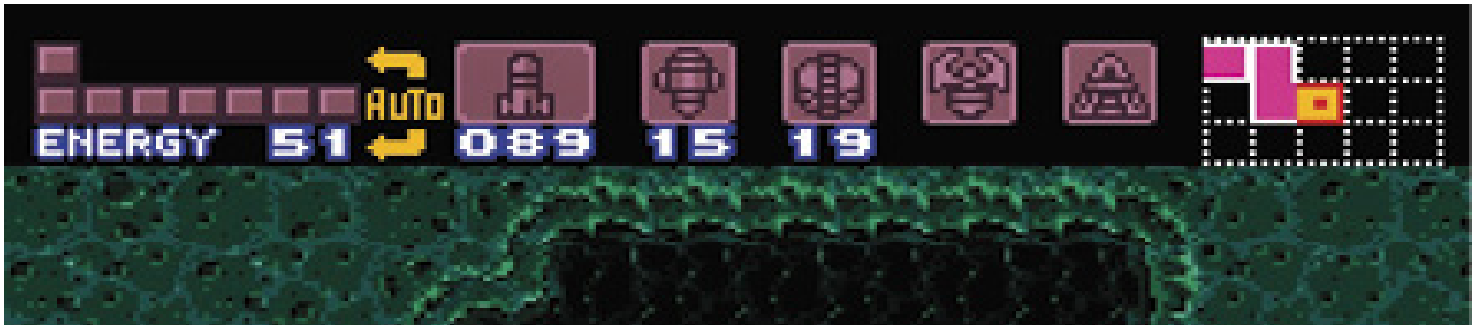
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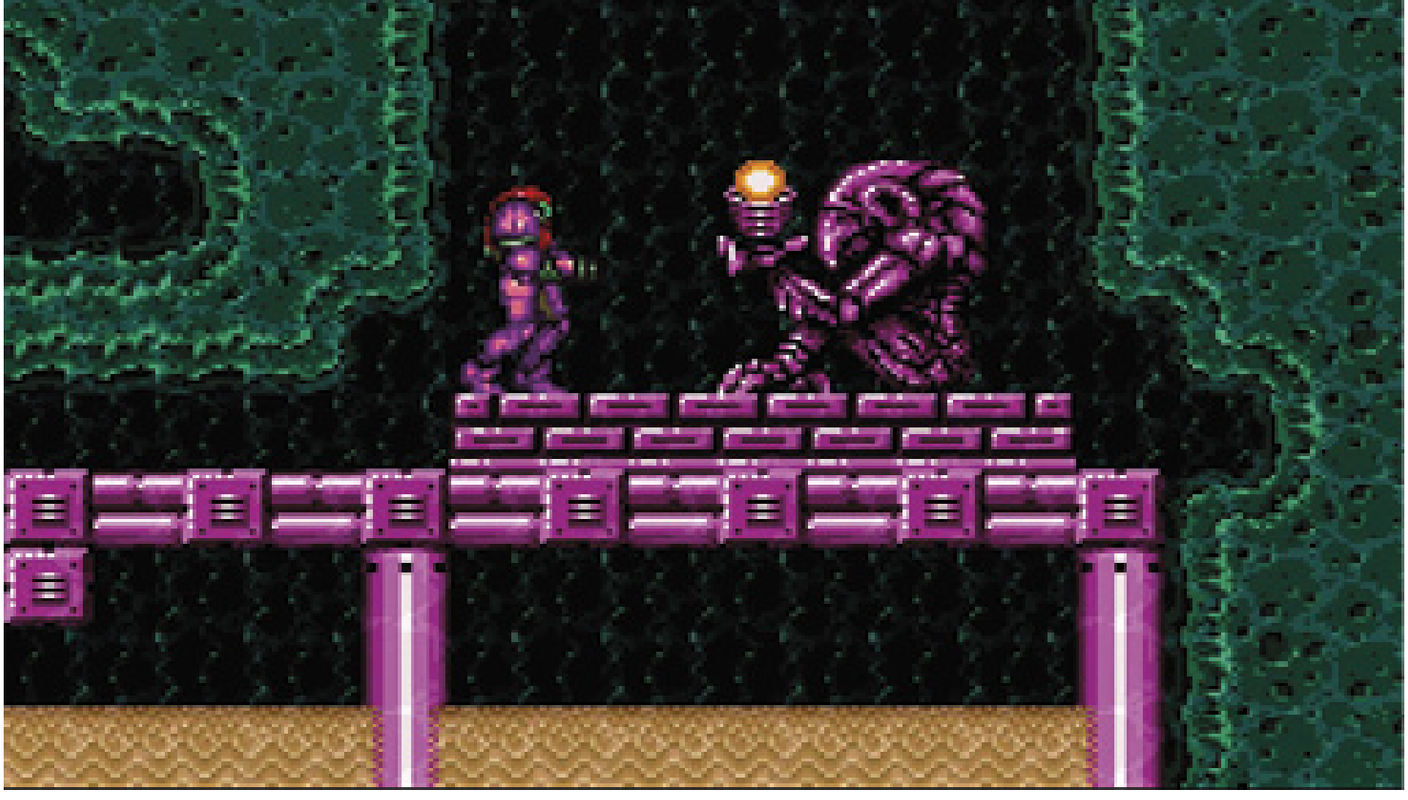
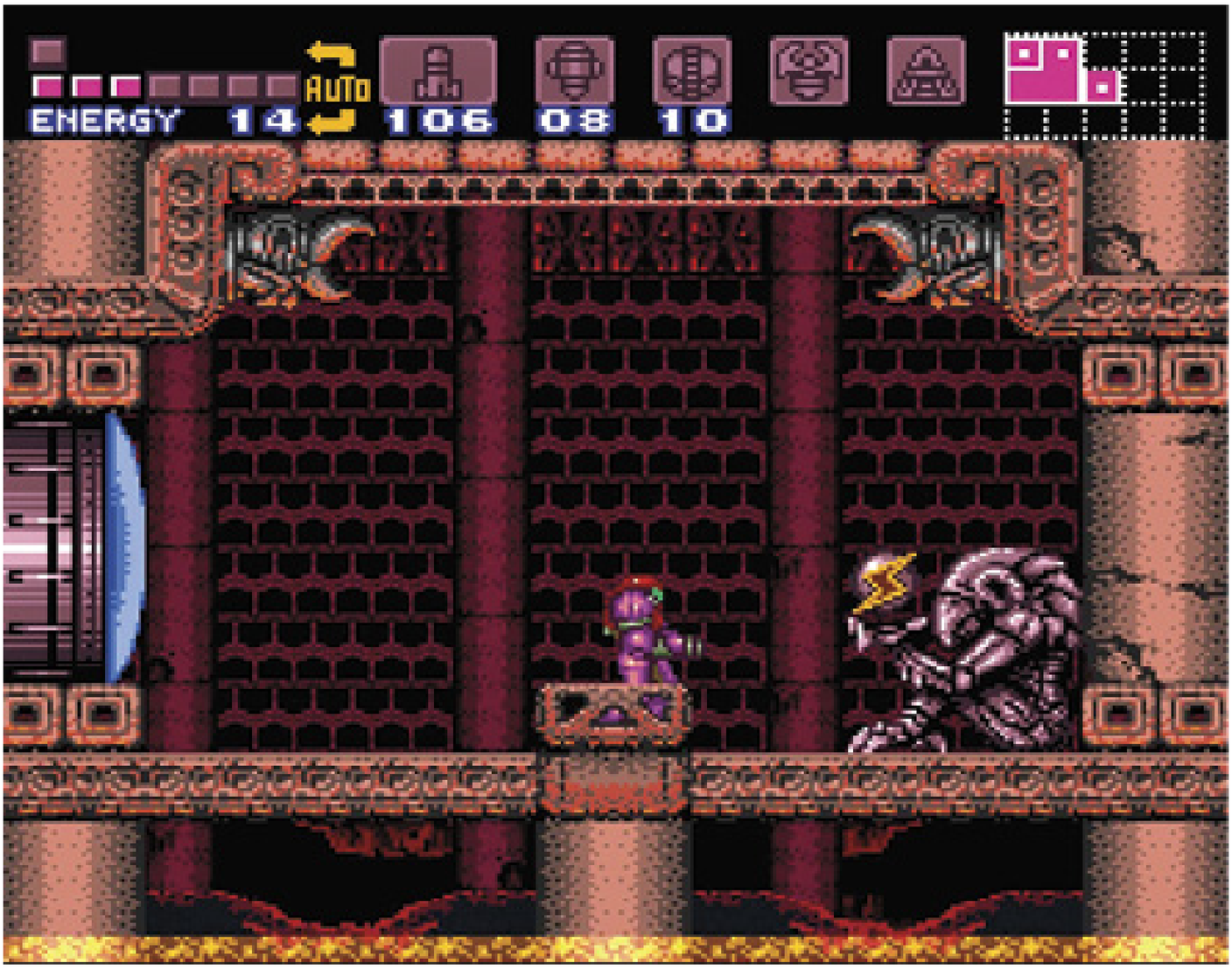
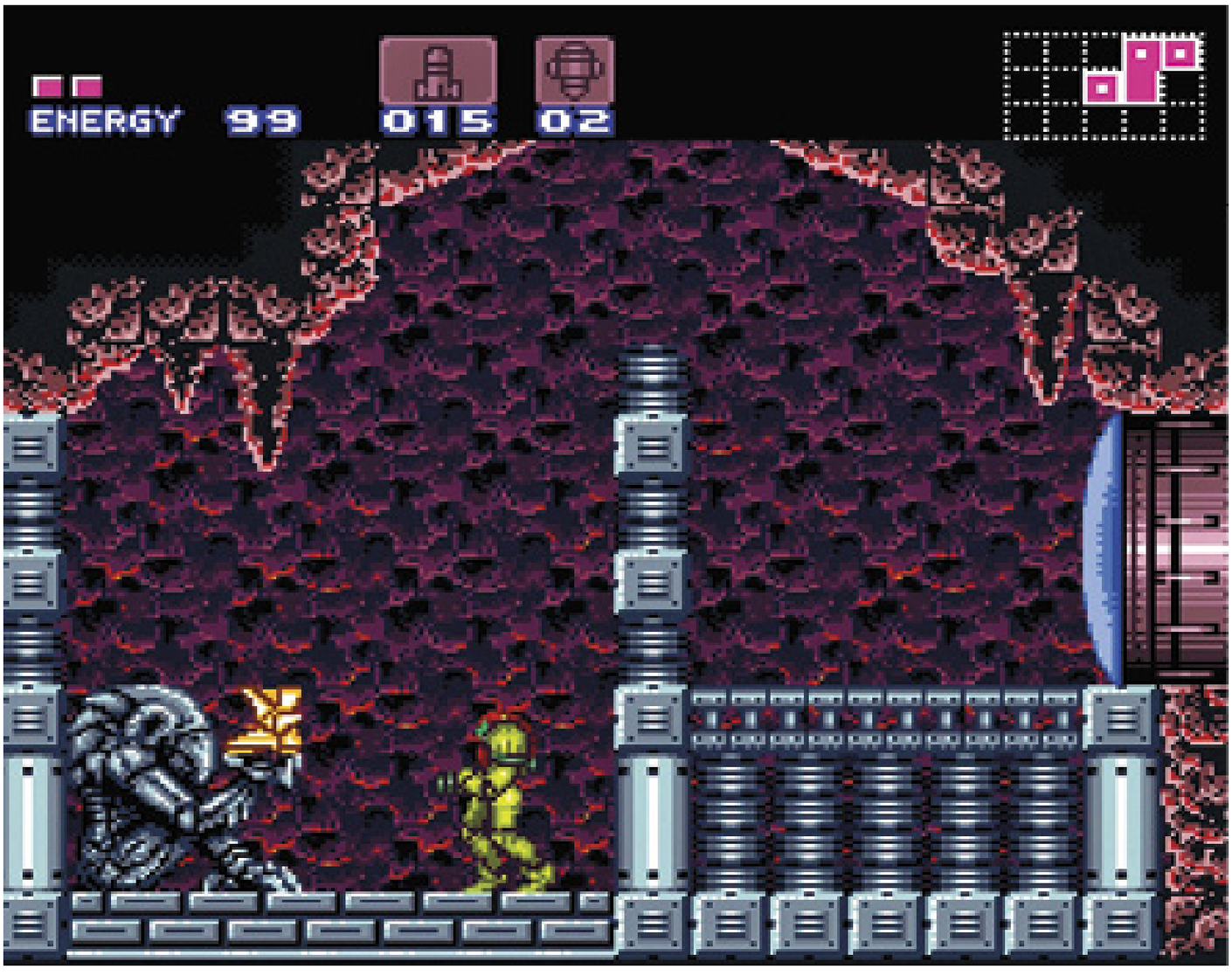




Boots

Samus' mobility options are drastically expanded upon in *Super Metroid*. Each one of her Boot upgrades is a literal game-changer, allowing players to reach new heights or quickly blast through areas in intended—and unintended—ways.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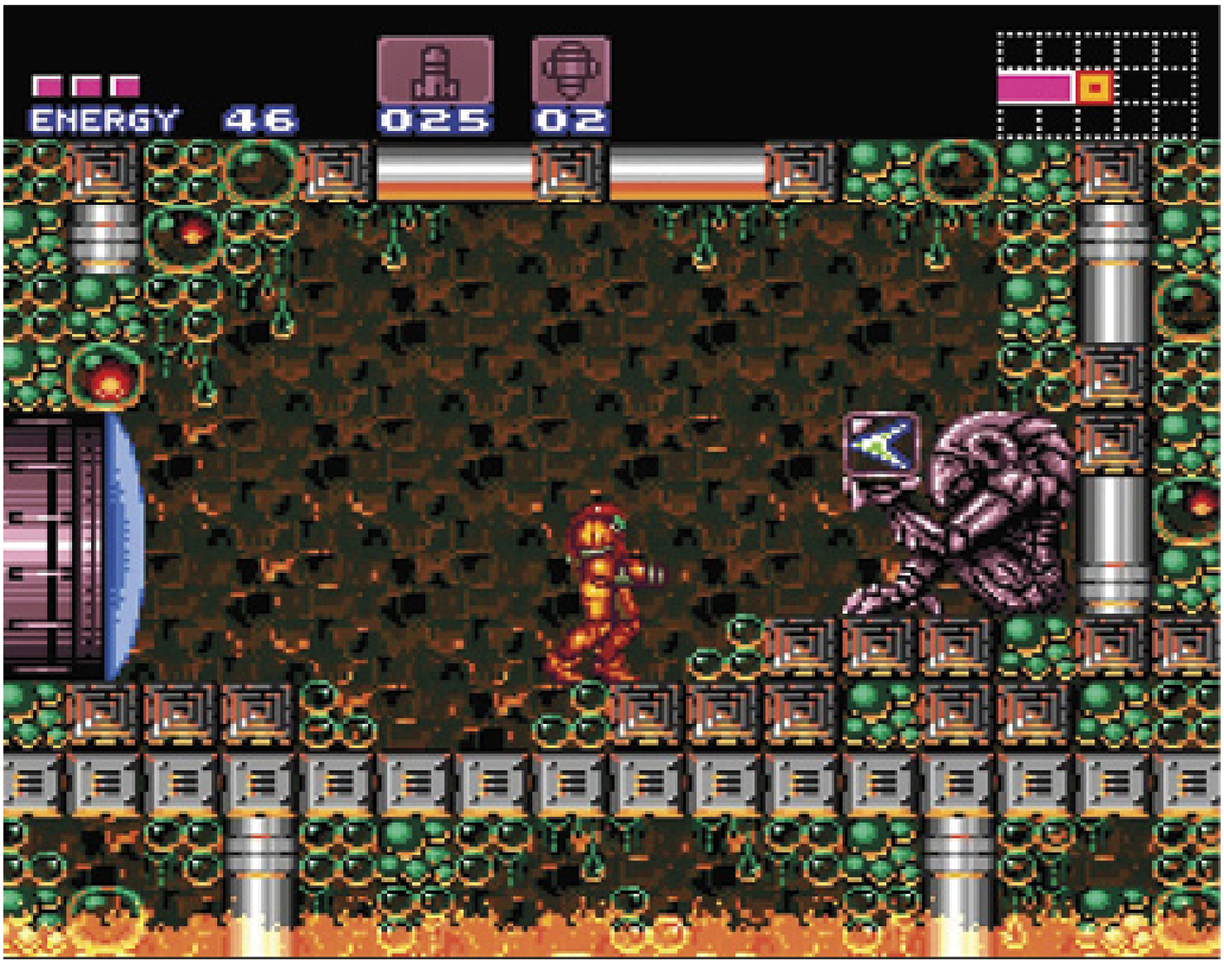
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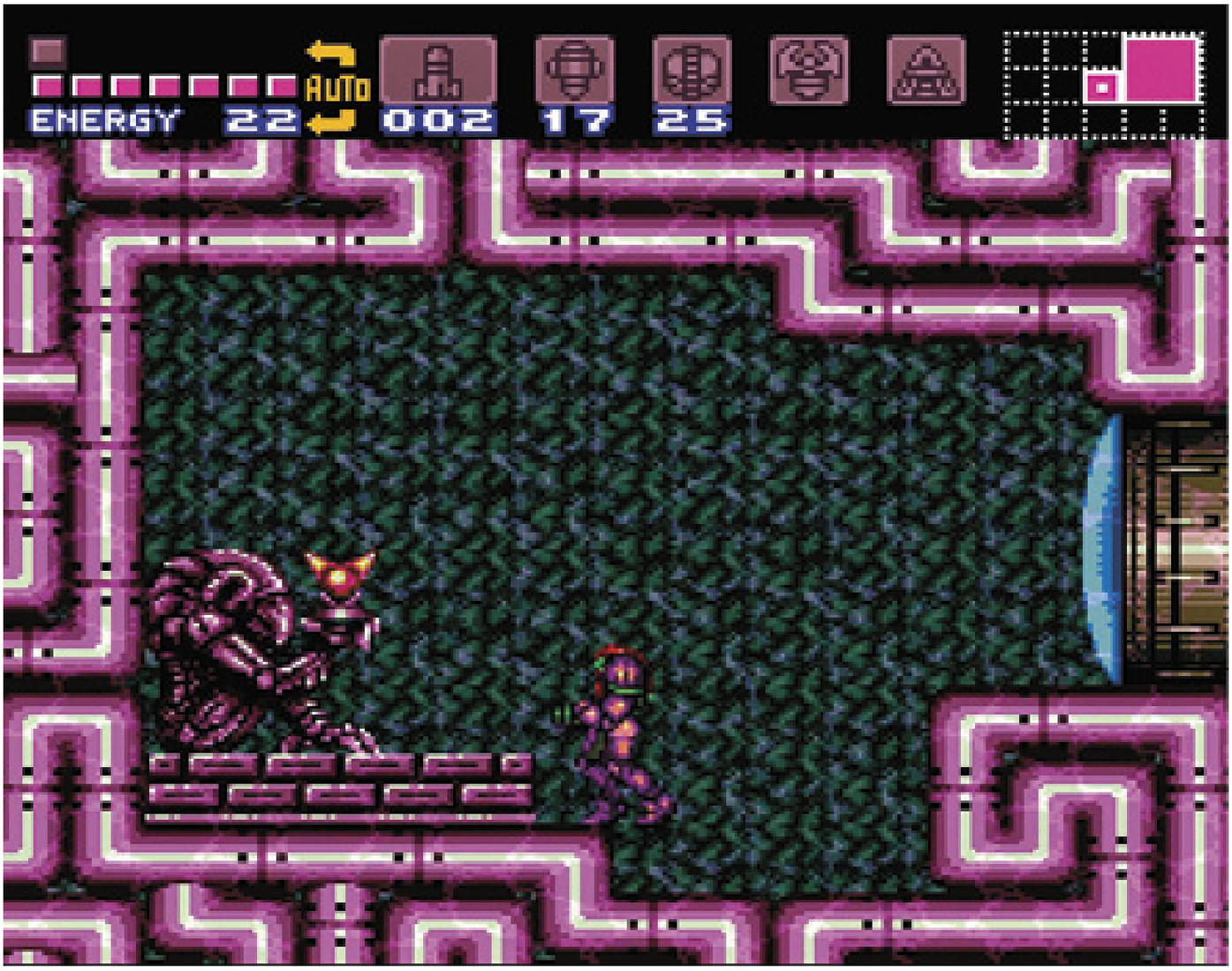
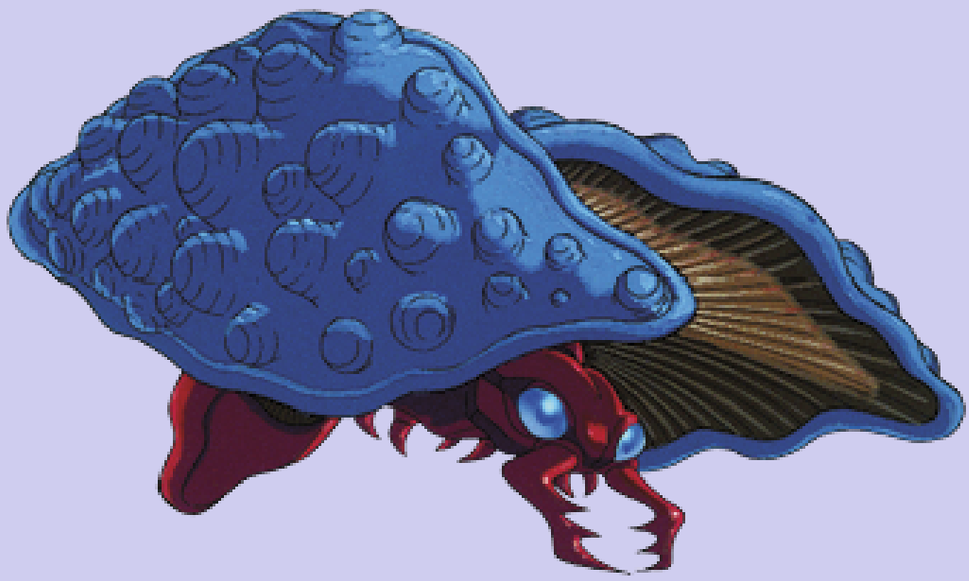
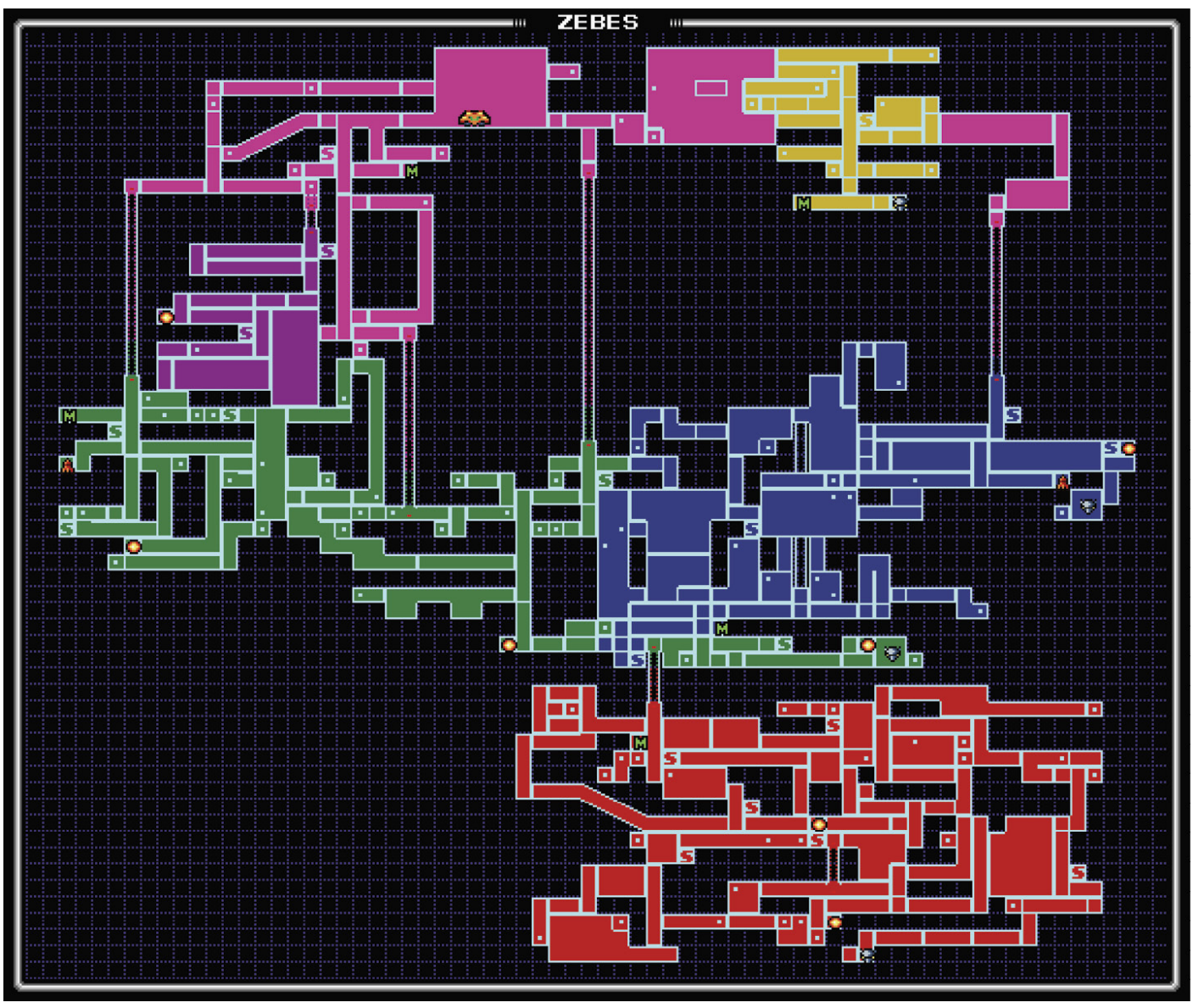


MURDER BEAM

There's a glitch that allows players to combine all Beams simultaneously into what has become known as the "Murder Beam." The Murder Beam functions strangely, and can continuously deal full or partial screen damage equal to a Power Bomb. Players often use it to damage Mother Brain during the non-interactive segments of the final boss battle, and the attack can also stick to Ridley's tail, creating a smoke trail. Misuse of this glitch can cause the game to crash, or prevent Samus from using her Beam at all.

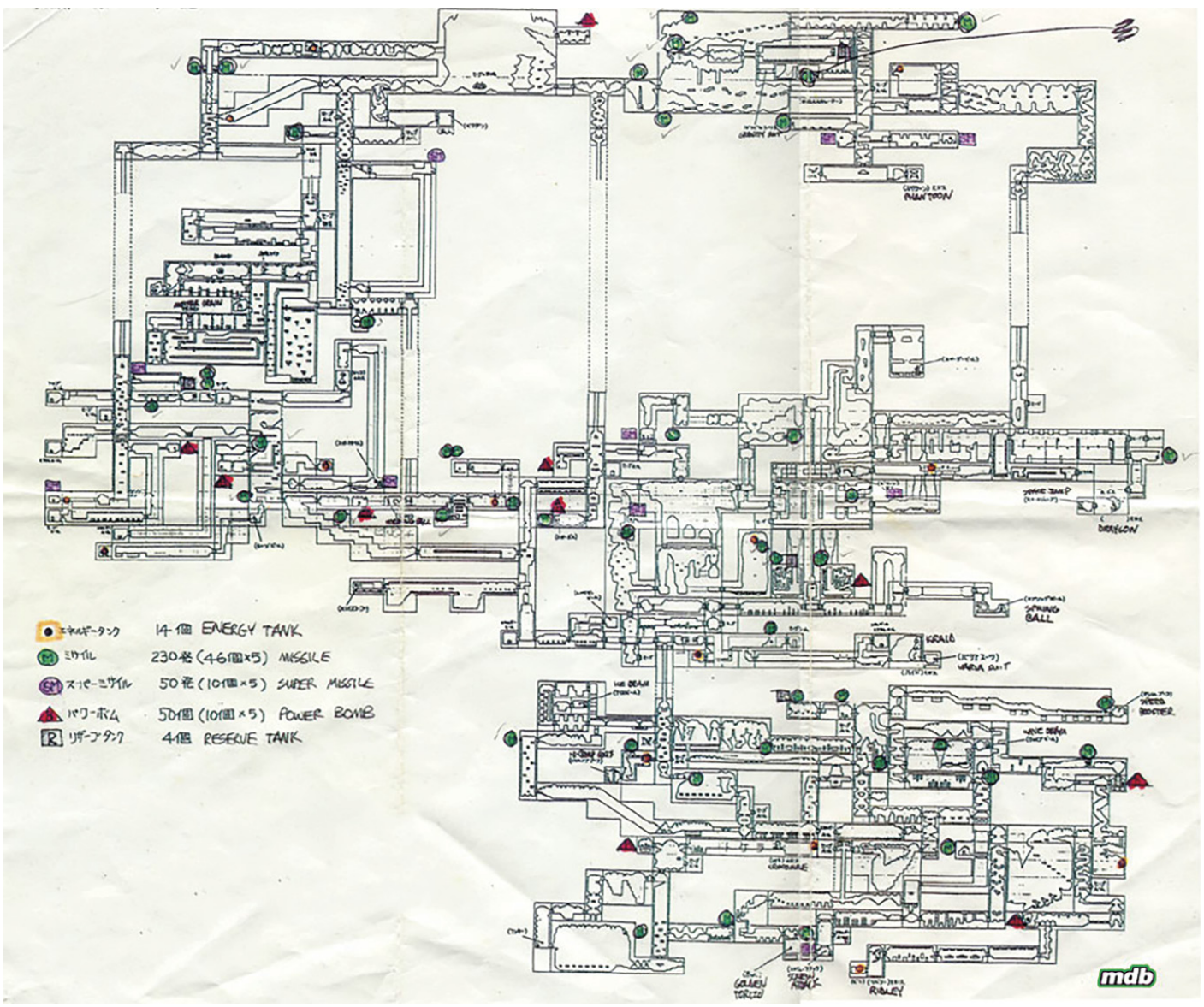


Zebes



As with Hyrule in *A Link to the Past*, *Super Metroid*'s depiction of Zebes was one of the most life-like environments ever seen in a 16-bit game. The sci-fi tubes and pipes that defined the original game's unique visual style are now besieged by natural, living elements and plentiful overgrowth. The developers instilled the sense of a rich and believable alien ecosystem that Samus must venture ever deeper into in search of Ridley and the Metroid larva.

Even more impressive is what the developers *don't* show. *Super Metroid* is a masterclass in quietly teaching players exactly what the developers want them to know without traditional tutorials, and it's even more remarkable given the profoundly non-linear nature of the game. In the case of the Hi-Boots, Samus is lured over an obstacle by a plainly visible power-up, only to become trapped unless she uses her new acquisition, demonstrating to the player what its function is without a single word. In the room before obtaining the Plasma Beam, there is a cluster of small, non-aggressive blobs. Each creature, called a Puyo, takes one Beam shot to kill, but as there are several present the group takes multiple shots to eliminate. When Samus returns to this room with the Plasma Beam the Puyos can be taken out with a single shot, illustrating the weapon's multi-target piercing effect. This interaction—and the Plasma Beam itself—can be skipped altogether.



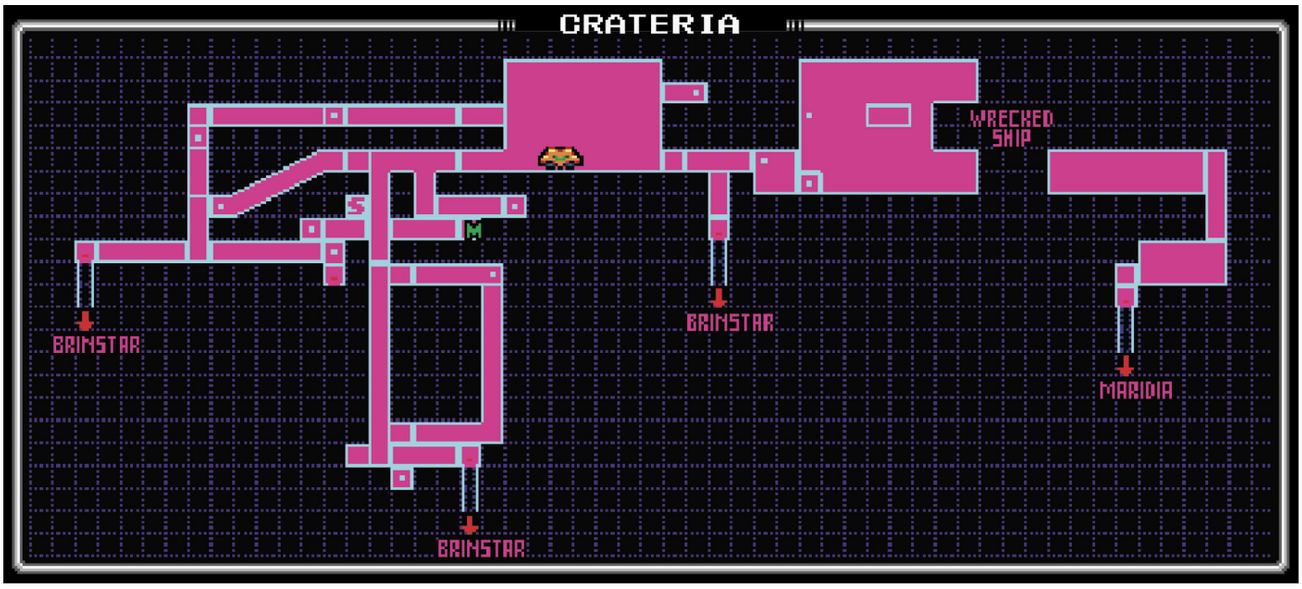
The original map used by the developers

Every step of the way, the game instills an underlying ideology of backtracking upon receiving new abilities—that jump that was too far, or that wall that was previously impenetrable—the hallmarks of an entire genre *Super Metroid* would come to popularize.

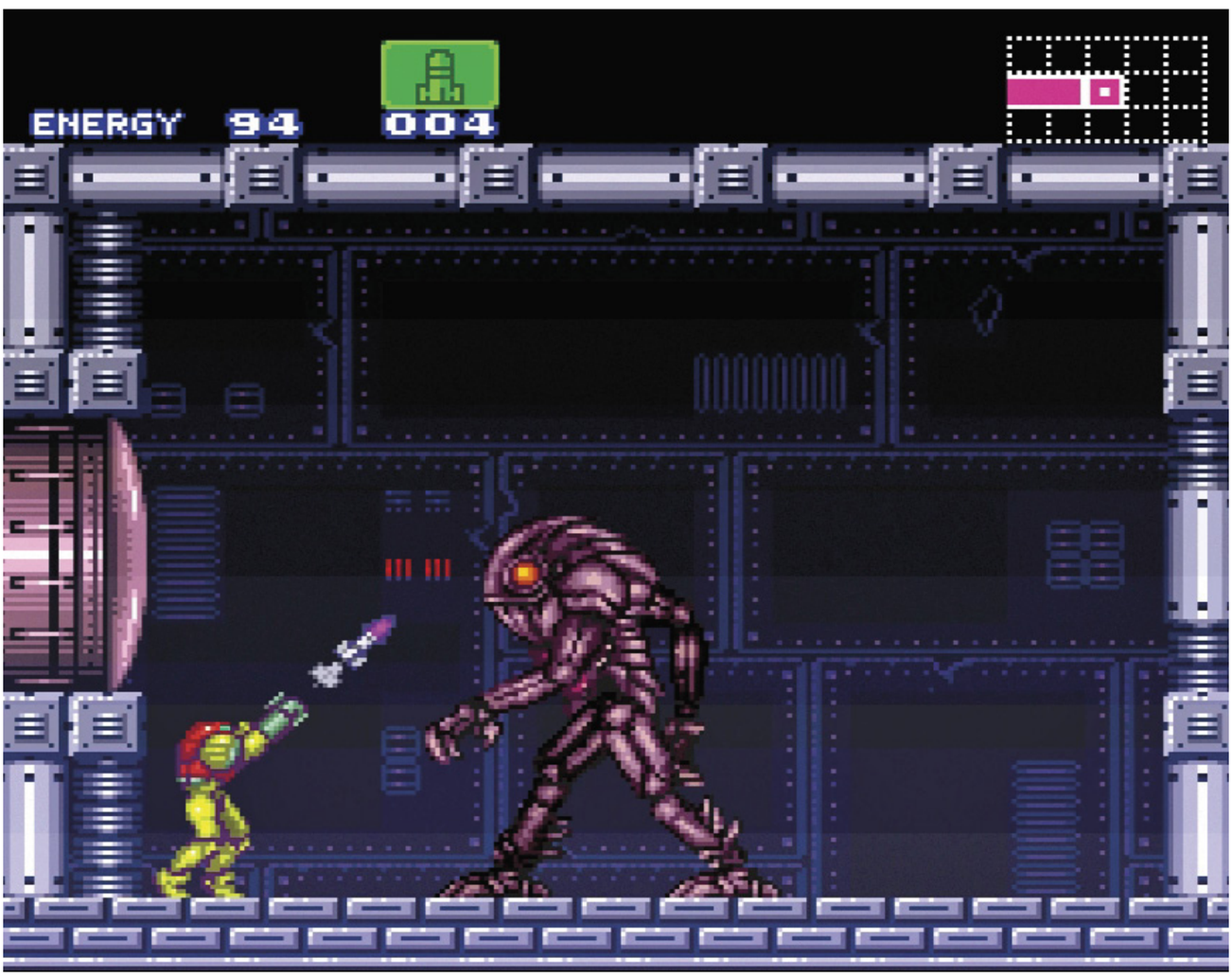
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Metroid

Crateria



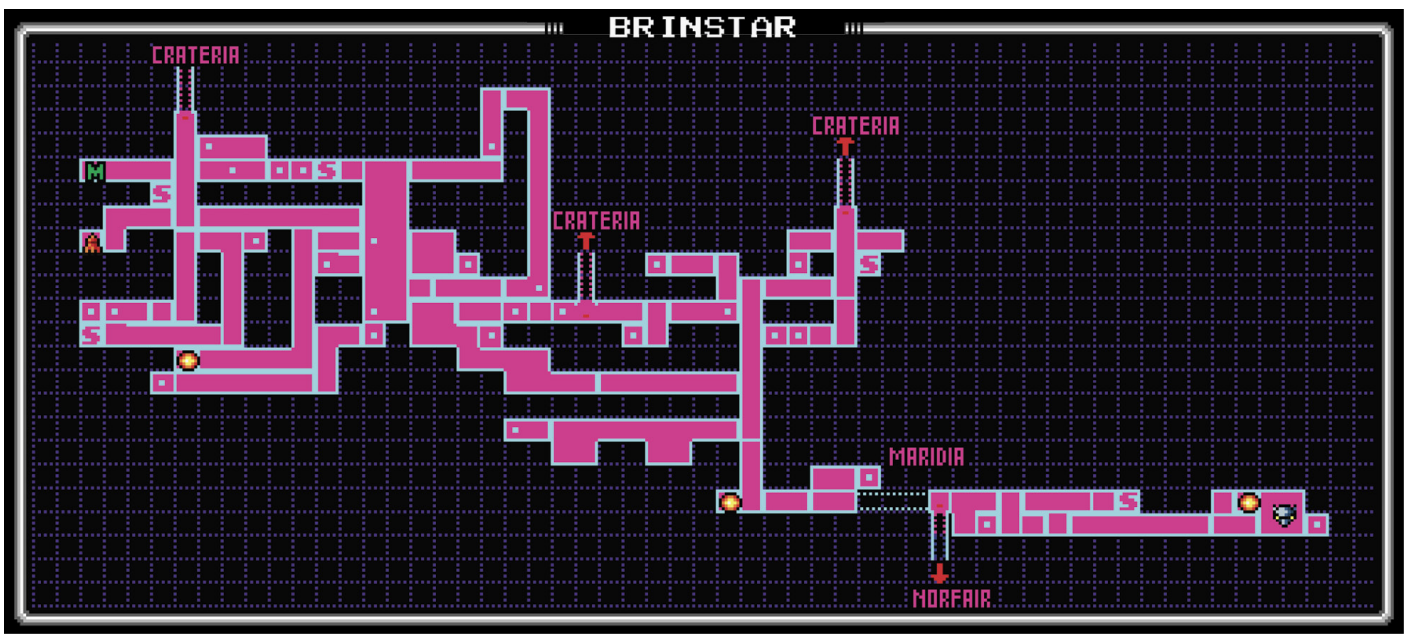
Endless acid rain showers down on Samus upon her arrival to the planet's tempestuous surface area known as Crateria. This rocky and mountainous region did not appear in the entirely subterranean original game, giving *Super Metroid* an immediately augmented sense of scale.



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Metroid

Brinstar



As Samus delves below ground into a series of labyrinthine caves, strange critters scamper off-screen, subtly suggesting the planet has largely remained undisturbed for some time. Upon finding the Morph Ball in Old Brinstar (the exact location of the original game's starting area), a watchful beam of light shines on Samus, following her every move. Something knows she's here. Returning to rooms that had previously been empty, Samus is confronted by Space Pirates and hostile alien lifeforms. As Mother Brain was created partially to control the planet's defense systems, the spotlight can be seen as an extension of the villainous AI.

Unlike the desolate remains of Old Brinstar, Upper Brinstar is a thriving underground jungle swarming with indigenous lifeforms, and makes up the majority of the area.

Featured Boss: Kraid

Kraid was given a substantial upgrade in size from his 8-bit days. The developers even cheekily included a miniature-sized Kraid enemy (known as Sclayd) that more closely resembles his classic stature a few moments before Samus faces the real deal. A similar "Fake Kraid" appeared in the first game, though it was the same size as the actual Kraid.

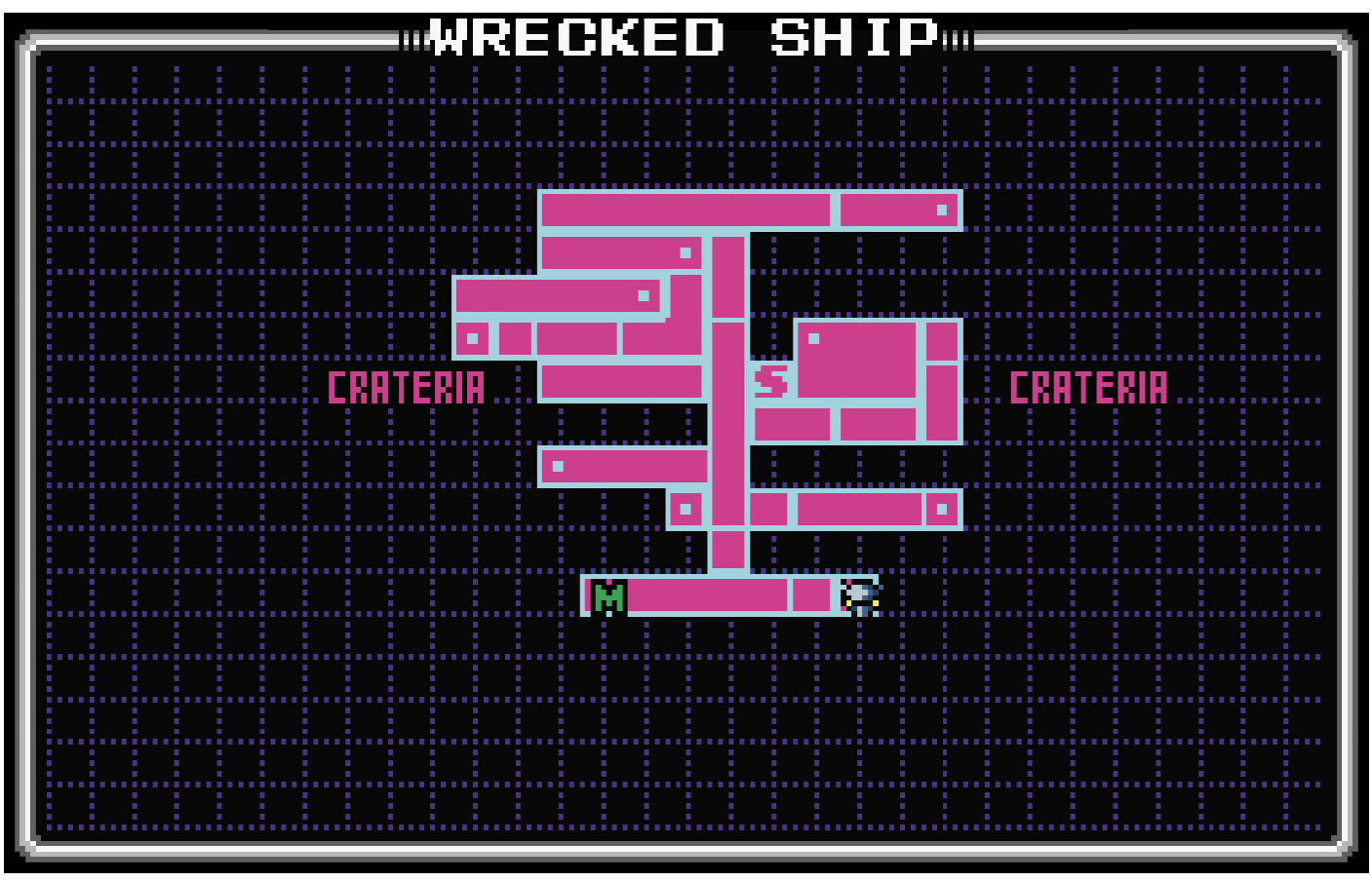
Rising out of the ground, Kraid's dramatic entrance shakes the area, sending debris in all directions. Kraid's open mouth is his only weak point, but it's possible to kill him nigh-instantly before he finishes rising into position. By damaging Kraid in a certain manner, his mouth is locked in an open position for a very brief span of time. Rapidly firing three Super Missiles into his mouth defeats the boss in a matter of seconds.

Kraid's original size was retconned in *Metroid: Zero Mission* to match his appearance in *Super Metroid*.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Metroid

Wrecked Ship

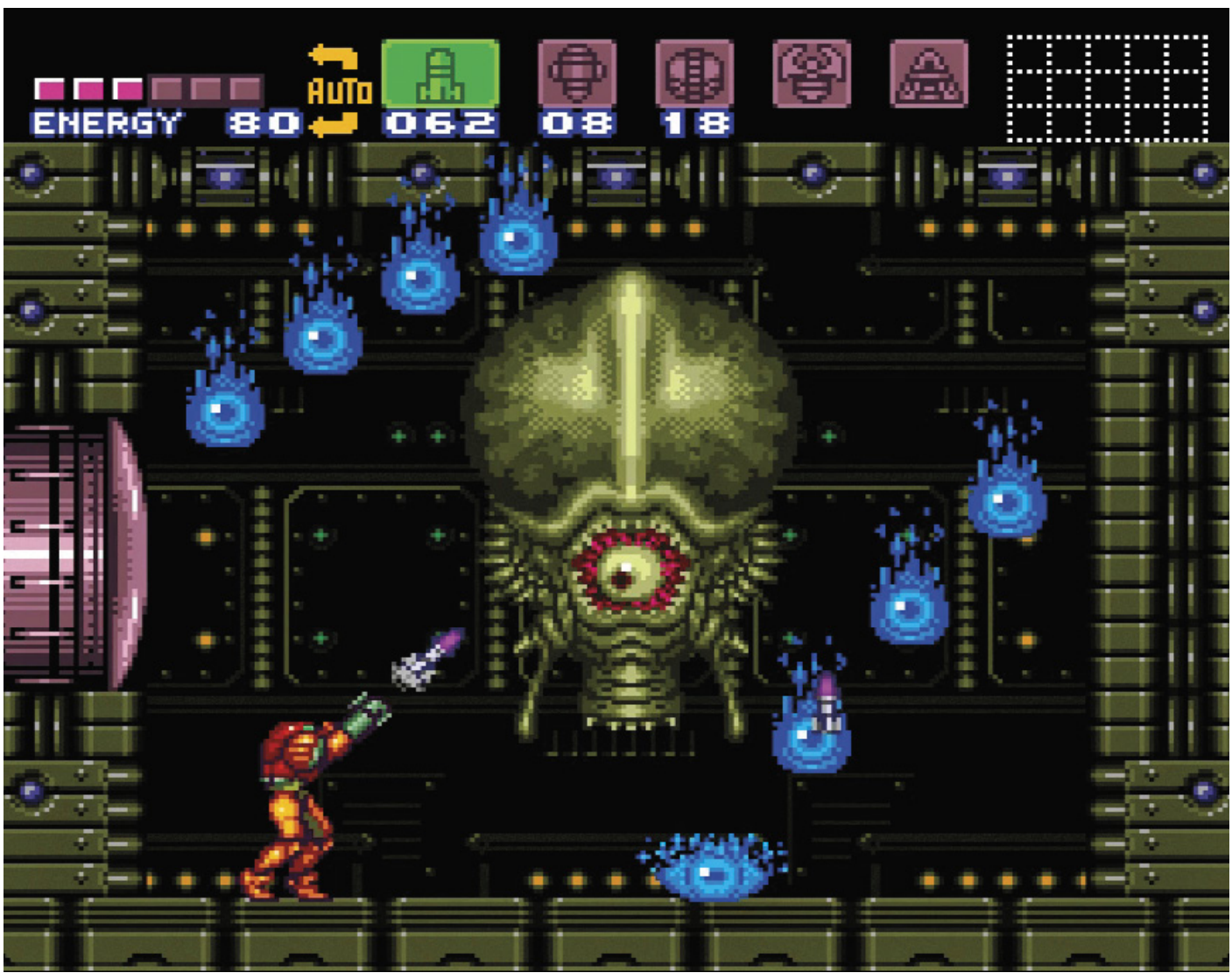


The Wrecked Ship is an ancient Chozo starship that crashed in a large lake within Crateria. Some of the Chozo astronauts survived, and became the founders of the Chozo civilization on Zebes. Samus must restore power to the ship by defeating the creature draining its energy, Phantoon. Upon doing so, areas of the partially sunken vessel become flooded.

Featured Boss: Phantoon

Phantoon is a leech-like specter feeding off not only the raw energy of the Wrecked Ship, but also the powerful brain waves of Mother Brain, which she employs to control the lifeforms of Zebes. The Cthulhu-inspired Phantoon, perhaps more than any other aspect of the *Metroid* series, has been described in various conflicting manners. The English instruction manual for *Super Metroid* explains that Phantoon is the living ghost of the Wrecked Ship itself, while the Japanese manual designates its origin as the physical manifestation of Mother Brain's malevolent consciousness. Concept art for *Metroid: Other M* further states that Phantoon is a multidimensional cosmic entity that stowed away on the Chozo vessel which eventually became the Wrecked Ship, possibly even causing its initial crash-landing. Phantoon is also the final boss of *Metroid: Other M*, though there's no explanation for its reappearance after its defeat in *Super Metroid*.

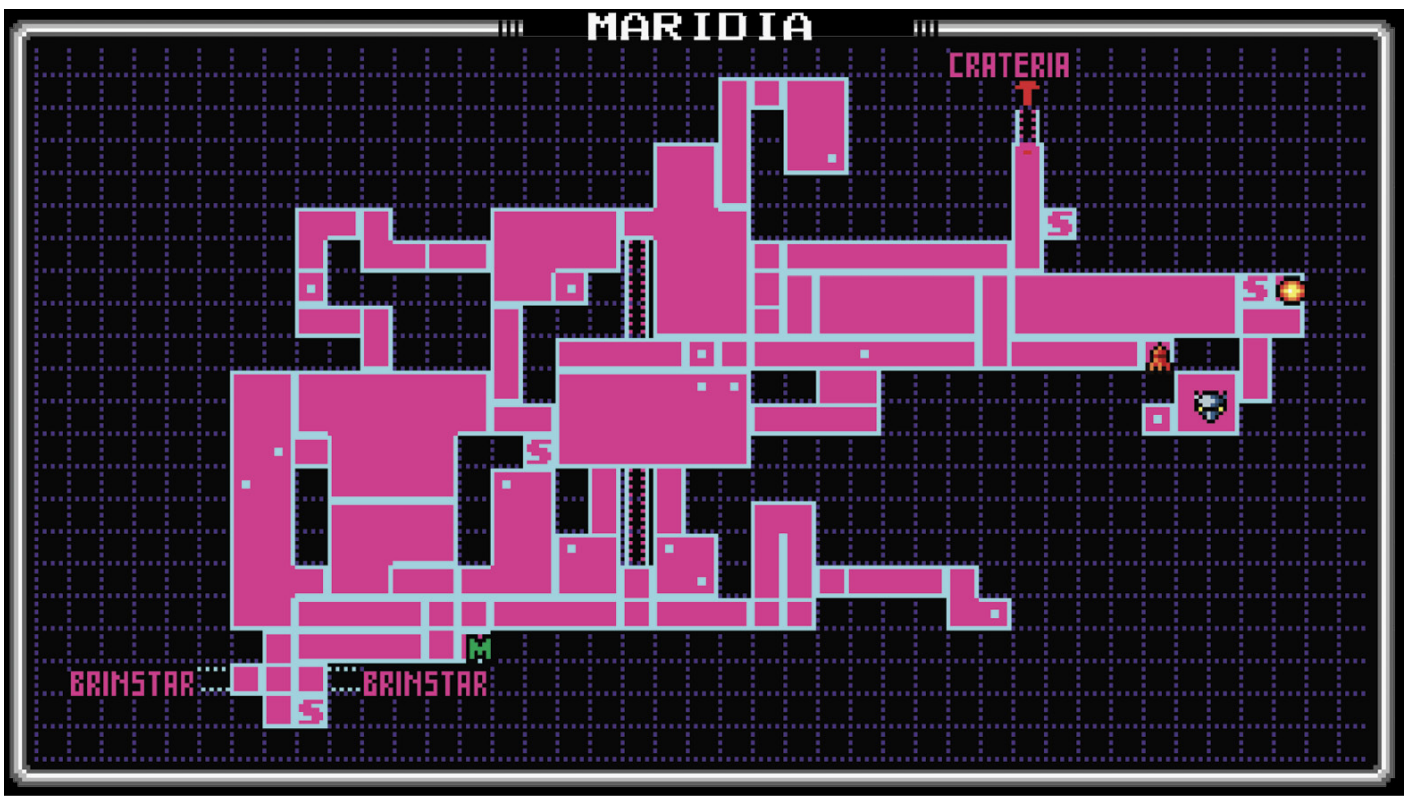
Phantoon is infamous for having ended several speedruns during high-profile livestream events due to routes that often pit Samus against the boss with very low health. It has several random attack and movement patterns, and its sole weak point, its eye, is not vulnerable when the boss is intangible.



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Metroid

Maridia



The aquatic Maridia appears exclusively in *Super Metroid*. Traversal is severely hindered by large bodies of water until Samus obtains the Gravity Suit. Entrance to Maridia can be accomplished in a very dramatic and memorable way by Power Bombing a large glass tunnel used to bypass an underwater area of Brinstar.

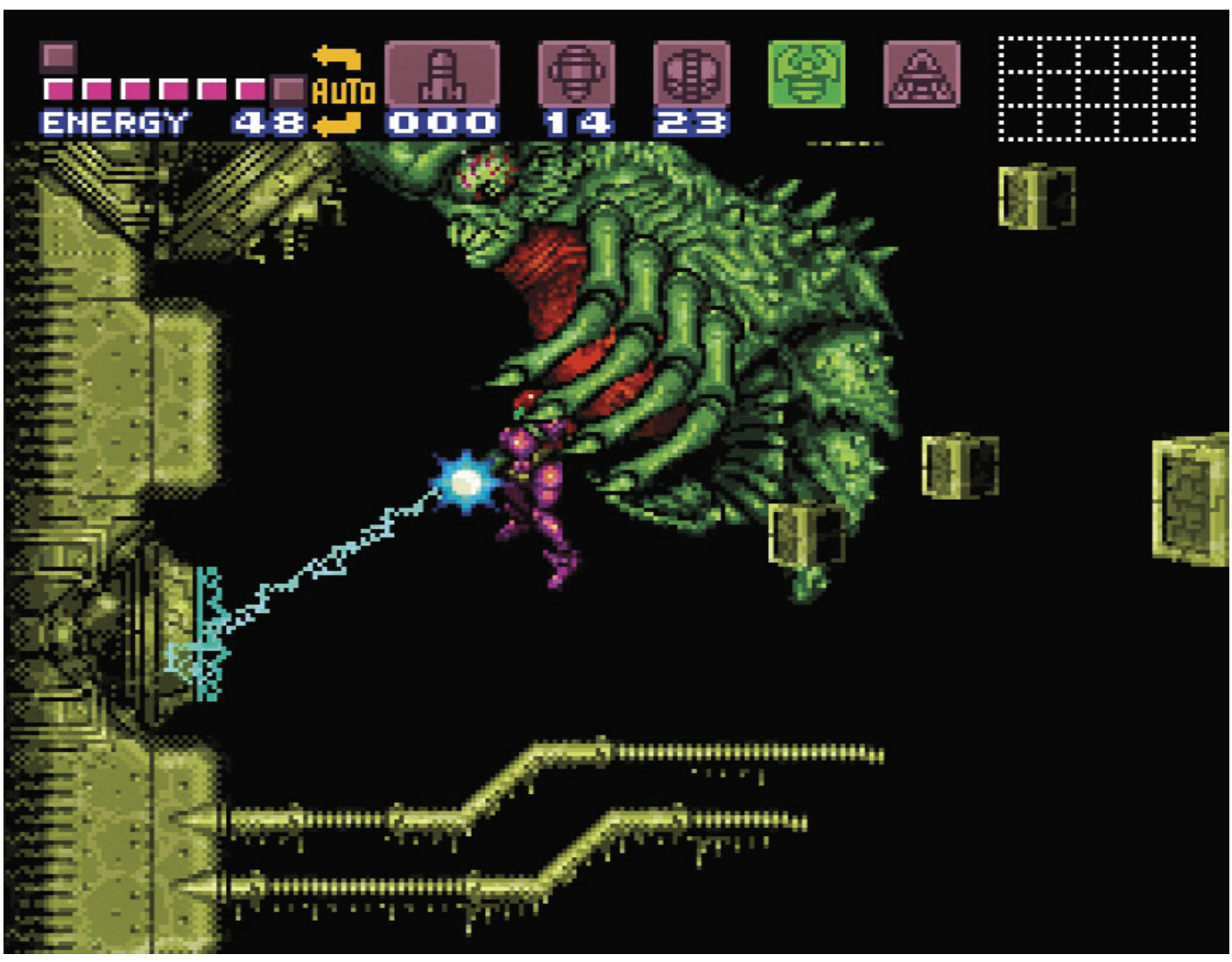
Space Pirate technology and deadly quicksand permeate subsections of Maridia.

Featured Boss: Draygon

Draygon is a fully grown Evir, an armored crustacean with a sensitive stomach. Despite their monstrous appearance, Draygon, Kraid, Ridley, and Phantoon are positioned as high-ranking members within Mother Brain's Space Pirate organization.

The battle with Draygon is notable for featuring a very cool alternate win condition. The path to Draygon's lair and large parts of Maridia overall are outfitted with Grapple Points. This is a subtle way of ensuring the Grappling Beam is on players' minds when facing the area's primary boss. Wall Cannons attack Samus from either side of Draygon's lair, but destroying them leaves behind a sparking electrical outlet. If Samus grapples one of these outlets after being grabbed by Draygon, the electricity surges through her suit, rapidly damaging it. Assuming she doesn't die first, the boss is defeated without having to waste a single missile.

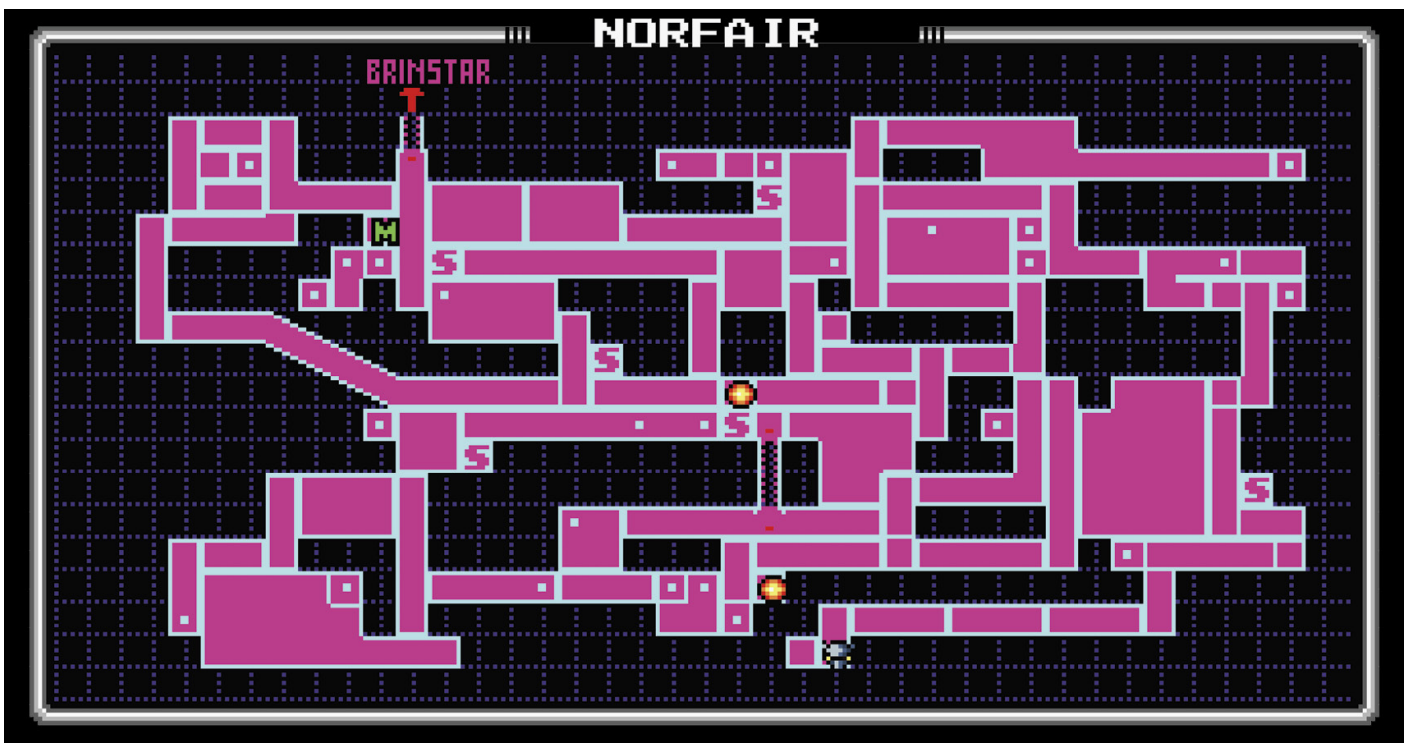
While that Easter egg was intentional, there's another exploit called the Blue Suit Glitch, which uses Draygon's mucus to charge a Shinespark. Hitting Draygon with a properly timed hyper jump puts Samus in a permanently Speed Boosted state. This allows her to Shinespark in virtually any room in the game, including many where a Shinespark would not otherwise be possible.



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Metroid

Norfair



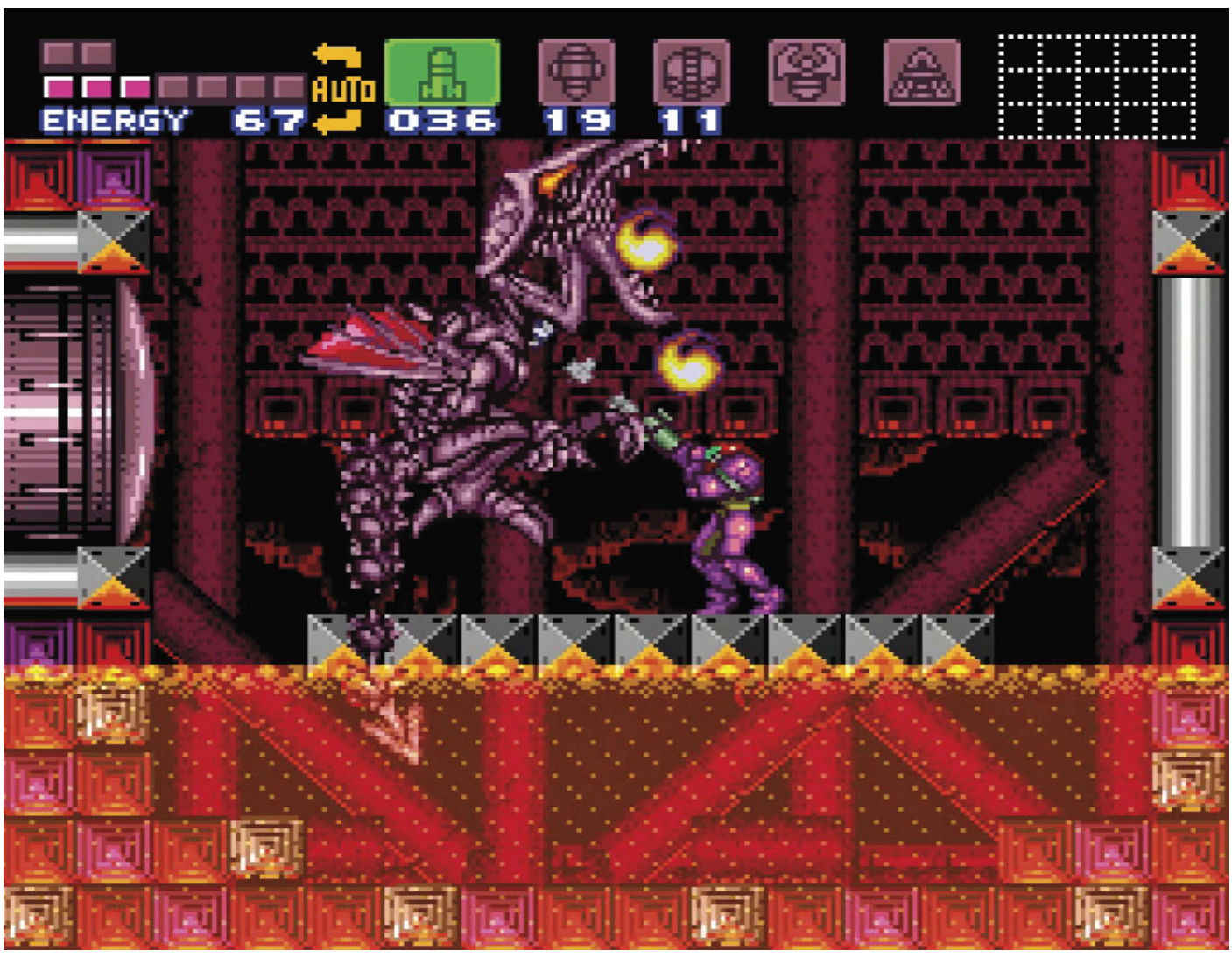
Norfair is the largest and deepest area of Zebes. Molten lava and volcanic activity accompany extreme heat that constantly melts away Samus's energy unless she has equipped the Varia Suit. It's possible to sequence-break *Super Metroid* by venturing through Norfair without proper protection in order to obtain power-ups normally acquired toward the end of the game, but it's extremely risky.

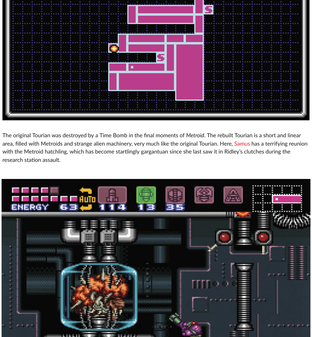
Featured Boss: Ridley

At last, Samus' pursuit of Ridley reaches its climactic conclusion. Unlike the multi-faceted battle with Draygon or even the shockingly violent way in which Norfair's other boss, Crocomire, is melted down to its bones after Samus pushes it into a sea of liquid hot magma, the confrontation with Ridley is straightforward. The layout of Ridley's lair largely resembles his lair in the original *Metroid*, a small platform suspended over a volcanic lagoon within relatively tight quarters. The battle isn't about spectacle; it's about closure. But Samus won't yet have it, as defeating Ridley only leads to a room where the hatchling's tube lies broken open, and empty…

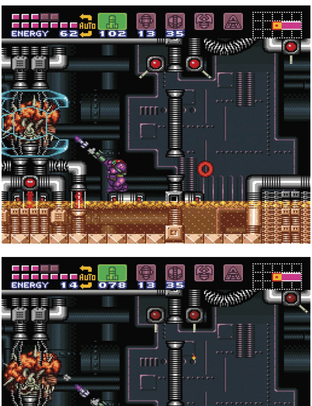
As one of countless small touches in the game, the prologue battle against Ridley can be "won." If players can damage Ridley enough while avoiding taking critical damage themselves, Ridley drops the baby Metroid, then picks it up and flies off as he normally would. It's just one of the many ways the developers made *Super Metroid* special, and made players who discover or achieve this Easter egg feel special because of it.

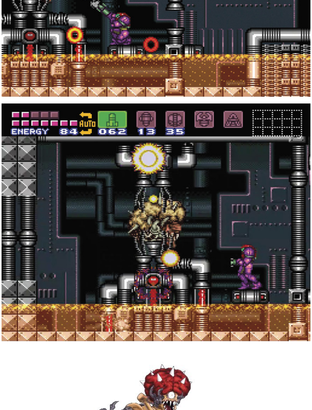
Ridley would appear again and again throughout the series in various forms, and like with Kraid, was given a visual reimagining for *Metroid: Zero Mission* in the style of his *Super Metroid* appearance.

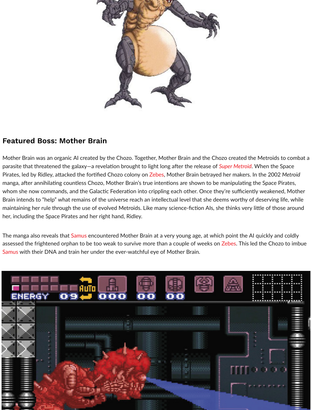


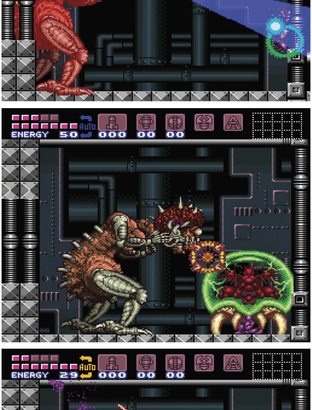


The original Tourian was destroyed by a Time Bomb in the final moments of Metroid. The rebuilt Tourian is a short and linear area, filled with Metroids and strange alien machinery, very much like the original Tourian. Here, Samus has a terrifying reunion with the Metroid hatchling, which has become startlingly gargantuan since she last saw it in Ridley's clutches during the research station assault.









Featured Boss: Mother Brain

Mother Brain was an organic AI created by the Chozo. Together, Mother Brain and the Chozo created the Metroids to combat a parasite that threatened the galaxy—a revelation brought to light long after the release of *Super Metroid*. When the Space Pirates, led by Ridley, attacked the fortified Chozo colony on Zebes, Mother Brain betrayed her makers. In the 2002 *Metroid* manga, after annihilating countless Chozo, Mother Brain's true intentions are shown to be manipulating the Space Pirates, whom she now commands, and the Galactic Federation into crippling each other. Once they're sufficiently weakened, Mother Brain intends to "help" what remains of the universe reach an intellectual level that she deems worthy of deserving life, while maintaining her rule through the use of evolved Metroids. Like many science-fiction AIs, she thinks very little of those around her, including the Space Pirates and her right hand, Ridley.

The manga also reveals that Samus encountered Mother Brain at a very young age, at which point the AI quickly and coldly assessed the frightened orphan to be too weak to survive more than a couple of weeks on Zebes. This led the Chozo to imbue Samus with their DNA and train her under the ever-watchful eye of Mother Brain.

Super Metroid's showdown with Mother Brain starts off as a mirror image of the original Metroid's final battle. As the game's final subversion of players' expectations, unlike in the original Metroid, the battle with Mother Brain does not end once she has taken enough damage inside her Control Capsule. After a brief moment of inactivity leaving the player to wonder, "Is that it?" the game replies with *Super Metroid*'s version of One-Winged Angel—a blaring musical theme and the reveal of Mother Brain's towering bipedal mechanical body. Her eye opens and for the first time she fights Samus directly, without relying on Tourian's security systems.

Super Metroid's entire final act is one of the most memorably crafted experiences in gaming history. Everything from the music to the semi-interactive storytelling is in a class of its own. The conclusion of the baby Metroid's story arc is surprising, intense, somber, and ultimately empowering, as its sacrifice allows Samus to eradicate Mother Brain. The game perfectly plays up the nostalgic angle, further enhancing every emotion coursing through the player as the curtain closes on the Zebes saga.

This was especially true in 1994, and remains to be the case decades later—the most genuine testament to *Super Metroid*'s many accolades.

22

Nintendo

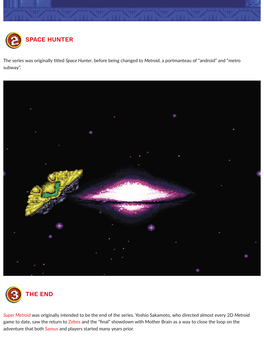
SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Metroid

16 Bits

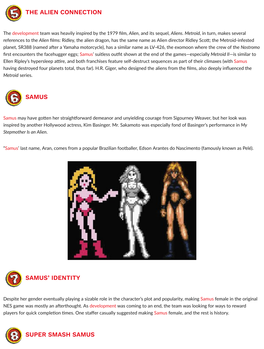
1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

The excellent Super Famicom artwork increases the contrast between Samus and her enemies. The characters and lighting are more defined, and Kraid manages to get most of his body in the shot instead of just his feet.



2 SPACE HUNTER

The series was originally titled *Space Hunter*, before being changed to Metroid, a portmanteau of "android" and "metro subway".



3 THE END

Super Metroid was originally intended to be the end of the series. Yoshio Sakamoto, who directed almost every 2D *Metroid* game to date, saw the return to Zebes and the "final" showdown with Mother Brain as a way to close the loop on the adventure that both Samus and players started many years prior.

4 VARIA SUIT

The oversized spherical pauldrons of Samus' Varia Suit came about due to the monochromatic color scheme of the Game Boy. In Metroid II: Samus Returns, there was no way to show suit upgrades via color changes, so the Varia Suit was given a cosmetic modification to help differentiate it. This design stuck, and has been emblematic of Samus' armor ever since. The name "Varia" is a mistranslation of "Barrier," but was made canon and Samus is depicted in the Varia Suit more often than her original Power Suit.

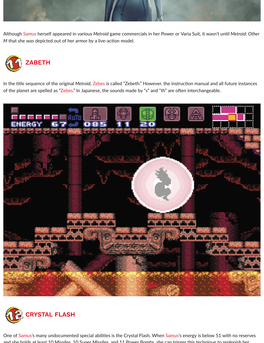
5 THE ALIEN CONNECTION

The development team was heavily inspired by the 1979 film, *Alien*, and its sequel, *Aliens*. *Metroid*, in turn, makes several references to the *Alien* films: Ridley, the alien dragon, has the same name as Alien director Ridley Scott; the Metroid-infested planet, SR388 (named after a Yamaha motorcycle), has a similar name as LV-426, the exomoon where the crew of the Nostromo first encounters the facehugger eggs; Samus' suit/tiles outfit shown at the end of the games--especially Metroid II--is similar to Ellen Ripley's hypersleep attire, and both franchises feature self-destruct sequences as part of their climaxes (with Samus having destroyed four planets total, thus far). H.R. Giger, who designed the aliens from the films, also deeply influenced the *Metroid* series.

6 SAMUS

Samus may have gotten her straightforward demeanor and unyielding courage from Sigourney Weaver, but her look was inspired by another Hollywood actress, Kim Basinger. Mr. Sakamoto was especially fond of Basinger's performance in *My Stepmother Is an Alien*.

"Samus' last name, Aran, comes from a popular Brazilian footballer, Edson Arantes do Nascimento (famously known as Pelé).



7 SAMUS' IDENTITY

Despite her gender eventually playing a sizable role in the character's plot and popularity, making Samus female in the original NES game was mostly an afterthought. As development was coming to an end, the team was looking for ways to reward players for quick completion times. One staffer casually suggested making Samus female, and the rest is history.

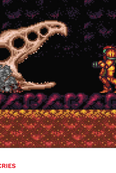
8 SUPER SMASH SAMUS

Samus has appeared as a playable character in every *Super Smash Bros.* game. As of *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (2008), Zero Suit Samus was made as a separate playable version of Samus. She is quicker and more agile outside of the suit, and is a popular choice for casual and competitive players alike.

9 BREAK ROOM

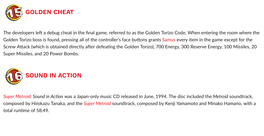
During the final stages of development, the Super Metroid team rarely left the office and instead slept in a break room. In the official Japanese strategy guide, artist Toru Osawa stated, "We were tense, couldn't sleep, couldn't go home, and couldn't even take a bath. It stank!"

While the team openly jokes about it, they said other Nintendo of Japan members who also shared the break room with the Super Metroid staff were not so upbeat, and often gave them "weird looks."



10 KILLER

The commercial for Super Metroid featured a vicious Doberman named Killer. A scientist unleashes Killer into a testing room to ensure the game is the most intense experience possible. After a few moments, the door is opened and Killer re-emerges... as a frightened Chihuahua. "Ship it!" the scientist shouts.



Although Samus herself appeared in various *Metroid* game commercials in her Power or Varia Suit, it wasn't until *Metroid: Other M* that she was depicted out of her armor by a live-action model.

11 ZEBETH

In the title sequence of the original *Metroid*, Zebes is called "Zebeth." However, the instruction manual and all future instances of the planet are spelled as "Zebes." In Japanese, the sounds made by "s" and "th" are often interchangeable.

12 CRYSTAL FLASH

One of Samus's many undocumented special abilities is the Crystal Flash. When Samus's energy is below 51 with no reserves and she holds at least 10 Missiles, 10 Super Missiles, and 11 Power Bombs, she can trigger this technique to replenish her health.

According to the Super Metroid comic in *Nintendo Power*, the Crystal Flash was taught to Samus by the Chozo who adopted her. While the technique can only be used in Super Metroid, Samus' Final Smash in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* pays homage to it.

13 SAVE OR KILL THE ANIMALS?

During the final escape sequence after defeating Mother Brain, Samus can return to the room where she first obtained the Morph Ball bombs. There she finds the three friendly Etecoons and Dachora, who had previously demonstrated the walljump and Shinespark abilities for her, trapped. Shooting the wall opens a passage and the critters escape. This slightly alters the ending of the game, where a small light can be seen in the distance racing away from the exploding Zebes. This is lovingly referred to as "saving the animals" and has become a staple of speedrunning marathons. Donations can vote to save the animals or "save the frames" (i.e. let the animals die to get a faster completion time), and the bidding war for this decision has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for charity each year. These same creatures reappear in *Metroid Fusion*.

14 KAIJU BATTLE CRIES

Several of Super Metroid's giant bosses let out sounds that are virtually identical to those used for certain kaiju in the Godzilla films. Can you match the boss to its Monster Island counterpart?

15 GOLDEN CHEAT

The developers left a debug cheat in the final game, referred to as the Golden Torizo Code. When entering the room where the Golden Torizo boss is found, pressing all of the controller's face buttons grants Samus every item in the game except for the Screw Attack (which is obtained directly after defeating the Golden Torizo), 700 Energy, 300 Reserve Energy, 100 Missiles, 20 Super Missiles, and 20 Power Bombs.

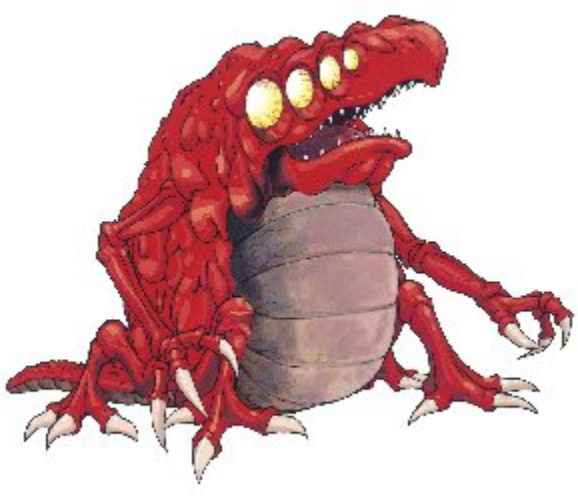
16 SOUND IN ACTION

Super Metroid: Sound In Action was a Japan-only music CD released in June, 1994. The disc included the *Metroid* soundtrack, composed by Hirokazu Tanaka, and the Super Metroid soundtrack, composed by Kenji Yamamoto and Minako Hamano, with a total runtime of 58:49.

Sebastian Haley

The size of the world, density of obstacles, as well as various strategies involving large amounts of risk and requisite nonstop precision make *Super Metroid* one of the most demanding speedruns among Nintendo's 16-bit classics.

There are numerous categories available to speedrunners: The tried and true Any% and 100%. As with more popular games, speedrunners have introduced a variety of unique runs to keep the competition interesting. There's Low%, which tasks runners with only collecting the minimum amount of items required to beat the game (the exact percentage is 14%), and Golden Torizo or GT Code, which utilizes a debug code that instantly grants Samus the majority of her items and upgrades very early in the game.



Perhaps the most interesting—and risky—category is referred to as RBO, or Reverse Boss Order. Reverse Boss Order makes heavy use of "sequence breaks," meaning playing the game in a way that was not intended by the developers. To face Ridley first instead of last, Samus must navigate Norfair without the Varia Suit, causing her suit's extremely low energy to rapidly drain. It's an exhilarating run to spectate, as runners are constantly near death.

An immense amount of skill and determination is required to speedrun *Super Metroid*, but every Space Hunter must start somewhere! Below are a few of the tricks used to set world records.

Basic

Walljumping

Walljumping is a very simple technique that's easy to learn, easy to overlook, and absolutely essential to speedrunning. To walljump, Samus must spin jump into a wall, then press a direction away from the wall and then press the Jump button almost immediately after. Chaining walljumps allows Samus to traverse tricky vertical areas very rapidly, as well as sequence break like crazy.

Bomb Jumping

Anyone who has played a *Metroid* game is familiar with Bomb Jumping. When using Bombs in morphball form, Samus is knocked upward or away from their blast. By chaining bomb blasts together, Samus can essentially travel anywhere she wants to, sequence breaking and gaining key power-ups very early. While not always as fast as other techniques, the sheer versatility of bomb jumping is worth the effort of learning it.

Arm-pumping

This one's super simple but strangely would only ever be needed when you and your speedrunning rival are within a couple of seconds of each other's records. Each time Samus aims up or down while running she is moved forward a single pixel. This is called "arm-pumping" and when done consistently over the course of an entire speedrun it adds up to a few seconds less than a runner who doesn't pump.

Advanced

Mockball

Mockball may seem complex at first, but is one of the first exploits a new speedrunner should arm themselves with. Samus' run speed is faster than her morphball speed. The Mockball trick lets her roll as fast as she runs. All that's required is morphing at the exact moment Samus would touch the ground after a jump and moving in the direction of her jump. Some players prefer to use a Hadoken-style quarter-circle motion to swiftly press Down and then the direction.

Once mastered, the Mockball allows for faster overall speed in certain areas of the game, as well as allowing Samus to obtain the Ice Beam early or unlock Super Missiles without needing to fight Spore Spawn.

Damage Boosting

When Samus takes damage she is knocked back a set length, determined by the damage source (hazards such as spikes send her flying nearly twice as far as all other sources). By quickly pressing in the opposite direction after taking damage, Samus can redirect her trajectory. This can be used to expedite Samus' movement through certain rooms or intentionally damage boost across areas that would normally require power-ups, like the spiked path leading to the X-Ray Scope. The only real concern is ensuring Samus has enough energy to sustain the damage, as well as any damage she may need to take on the way back.

Quick and Short Charging

Once the Speed Booster has been obtained, using its charged "blue suit" state to Shinespark becomes a near-constant staple of the remainder of any *Super Metroid* speedrun. Normally, there are only certain rooms with enough even ground to allow Samus to build up the Speed Booster and achieve the blue suit. By using a method called "Quick Charging," Samus can charge the Speed Booster in a reduced amount of space, enabling the Shinespark in places it was never intended to be used in. This is done simply by holding the direction Samus needs to run and then holding the Dash button shortly after. Normally both are pressed at the same time.

There's a more advanced version, called "Short Charging," which further manipulates the Speed Booster mechanic to achieve Shinesparks in almost any room.

Zebetite Skip

The room that initially houses Mother Brain, known as the Zebesian Command Center, is a classic video game location, having appeared in both the original *Metroid* and *Super Metroid*. It's also one of the more obnoxious parts of either game, as the defenses include a lava moat, turrets, targeted rings of energy called Rinkas, and Zebetite, a regenerative wall that acts as an energy source for Mother Brain. While you attempt to whittle down each of the several Zebetites, Mother Brain's defense constantly assault Samus from all directions.

With a relatively simple trick, it's possible to skip the Zebetites and cut down not only on time but frustration. Although it can be done a variety of ways (important as not all categories equip Samus with the same power-ups), the easiest is to freeze the Rinka that spawns underneath the first Zebetite. Samus should jump into the Zebetite, taking damage then spin jump back through it and out the other side. Doing this successfully prevents

the other Zebetities from spawning, giving Samus a clear path to Mother Brain. In case you're wondering, the frozen Rinka is key to this trick, as landing on it moves Samus forward a pixel, technically putting her inside the Zebetite's hitbox. Normally this would eject her backwards, but since she's temporarily invincible from already taking damage, she can pass through it.

Easy Mother Brain

As part of a semi-interactive sequence during the final boss battle, Mother Brain fires a "rainbow beam" at Samus to reduce her health down to a critical state. Normally this would leave Samus is a kneeling position, helpless to defend against another rainbow beam that Mother Brain charges up before Baby saves the day. It's possible to break out of the kneeling state and keep attacking Mother Brain while she is grayed out (sucked dry by Baby). It requires approximately 40 fully charged shots to defeat Mother Brain's third phase, but with this method it's possible to get her within just a few hits before she even starts attacking.

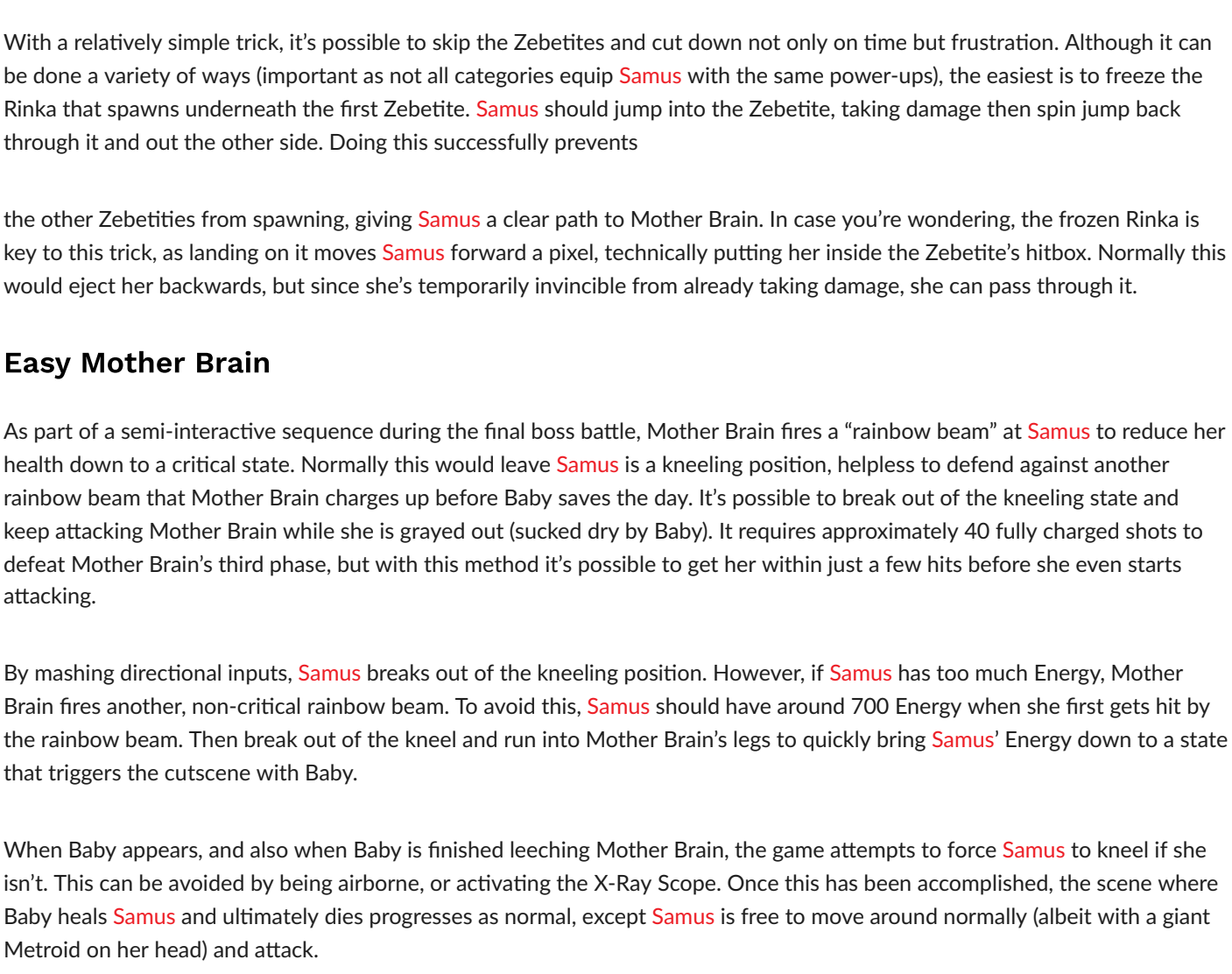
By mashing directional inputs, Samus breaks out of the kneeling position. However, if Samus has too much Energy, Mother Brain fires another, non-critical rainbow beam. To avoid this, Samus should have around 700 Energy when she first gets hit by the rainbow beam. Then break out of the kneel and run into Mother Brain's legs to quickly bring Samus' Energy down to a state that triggers the cutscene with Baby.

When Baby appears, and also when Baby is finished leeching Mother Brain, the game attempts to force Samus to kneel if she isn't. This can be avoided by being airborne, or activating the X-Ray Scope. Once this has been accomplished, the scene where Baby heals Samus and ultimately dies progresses as normal, except Samus is free to move around normally (albeit with a giant Metroid on her head) and attack.

Expert

Baby Metroid Skip

When Samus finally catches up with Baby (the stolen Metroid hatchling from the prologue), it drains her energy to near death before realizing who she is. This is a time-consuming sequence that can be skipped entirely with a series of carefully timed jumps. Due to Baby's odd movement pattern, which orbits Samus, eventually getting closer and closer, it's possible to "jump-rope" over the massive Metroid all the way to the exit and escape untouched.



X-Ray Climb

By getting "stuck" in a doorway, the X-Ray Scope can be used to climb out of bounds and "beat" the game. Once Samus is out of bounds she needs to blindly navigate numerous rooms, writing the game's memory in a specific way before activating the X-Ray Scope again at a precise Y coordinate, triggering Zebes' self-destruct sequence. By using a series of difficult damage boosts to obtain the X-Ray Scope, this glitch enables *Super Metroid* to be completed in under 13 minutes. More importantly, the animals are automatically saved!

Super Metroid wasn't the first game to feature non-linear exploration (the original *Metroid* and *The Legend of Zelda* are also early examples), but it absolutely popularized the formula. Combined with *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, which was directly inspired by *Super Metroid* and *The Legend of Zelda*, the Metroidvania genre was born.

The most notable instances of Metroidvania games are, unsurprisingly, from the Metroid and Castlevania series. However, the genre experienced a modern resurgence thanks in large part to the best-selling *Shadow Complex*, as well as indie games such as *Cave Story*, *Axiom Verge*, *Guacamelee*, *Ori and the Blind Forest*, and *Hollow Knight*. But Metroidvania hallmarks such as exploring a large interconnected map and backtracking after obtaining new equipment are not confined to two dimensions, also being featured heavily in recent mainstream games such as *Rise of the Tomb Raider* and the *Dark Souls* and *Batman Arkham* franchises.

Metroid Story Chronology

Metroid Fusion

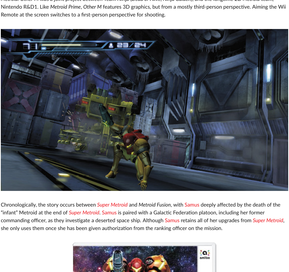
2002, Game Boy Advance

The first Metroid game since *Super Metroid* eight years prior, *Metroid Fusion* followed very closely in its predecessor's image. Developed by a combination of *Super Metroid* veterans and the *Wario Land 4* team, the plot revolves around alien parasites and reveals that Metroids were created by the Chozo to combat this threat before it spread throughout the galaxy. The game was designed to be more accessible, and eschews some of the invisible genius or "Metroid-ness" (as director Yoshio Sakamoto called it) of the previous game.

Metroid Prime: Trilogy

2002-2007, Nintendo GameCube / Wii

Released simultaneously with *Metroid Fusion*, *Metroid Prime* reinvented the series' iconic gameplay by bringing it into a fully 3D world. Samus is now played from a first-person perspective, putting a much larger emphasis on aiming and shooting. Samus can use her visor to scan various targets such as enemies and environments to gain valuable or world-building information. Platforming and puzzles are still involved, however, and the Morph Ball shifts the camera to a third-person perspective.



Developed by Texas-based Retro Studios, *Metroid Prime* was critically acclaimed and immensely successful, reviving the *Metroid* franchise for the modern era. Two sequels, *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* (2004) and *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption* (2007), were released, before being compiled into *Metroid Prime: Trilogy* for the Wii (2009). Aside from their excellent gameplay, the *Prime* games also featured exceptional soundtracks.

The *Prime* trilogy spawned several handheld spin-offs, including *Metroid Prime Hunters*, *Metroid Prime Pinball*, and *Metroid Prime: Federation Force*.

Metroid: Zero Mission

2004, Game Boy Advance

A remake of the original NES *Metroid*, *Zero Mission* was developed by the same team as *Super Metroid* and *Metroid Fusion*. It gave Yoshio Sakamoto the opportunity to work additional storytelling elements into the game tying it to the more developed Chozo and Federation plotlines. Samus' Zero Suit also makes its debut, though it wouldn't officially be called that until her appearance in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* in 2008.

Metroid: Other M

2010, Wii

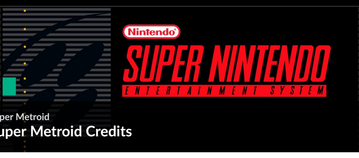
Metroid: Other M was a joint project between Team Ninja (*Dead or Alive*, *Ninja Gaiden*), and the longtime 2D Metroid team, Nintendo R&D1. Like *Metroid Prime*, *Other M* features 3D graphics, but from a mostly third-person perspective. Aiming the Wii Remote at the screen switches to a first-person perspective for shooting.

Chronologically, the story occurs between *Super Metroid* and *Metroid Fusion*, with Samus deeply affected by the death of the "infant" Metroid at the end of *Super Metroid*. Samus is paired with a Galactic Federation platoon, including her former commanding officer, as they investigate a deserted space ship. Although Samus retains all of her upgrades from *Super Metroid*, she only uses them once she has been given authorization from the ranking officer on the mission.

Metroid: Samus Returns

2017, Nintendo 3DS

Metroid: *Samus Returns* is a remake of *Metroid II: Return of Samus*, and the first traditional 2D-style *Metroid* game since Metroid: Zero Mission. Apart from improved graphics, melee combat akin to that in Metroid: *Other M* has been added, along with 360-degree aiming and Power Suit upgrades that were not available in the original game. The game was jointly developed by Nintendo and MercurySteam (*Castlevania: Lords of Shadow*).



Super Metroid

Super Metroid Credits

Producer

Makoto Kanoh

Director

Yoshio Sakamoto

Background Designers

Hirofumi Matsuoka

Masahiko Mashimo

Hiroyuki Kimura

Object Designers

Tohru Ohsawa

Tomoyoshi Yamane

Samus Original Designer

Hiroji Kiyotake

Samus Designer

Tomomi Yamane

Sound Program and Sound Effects

Kenji Yamamoto

Music Composers

Kenji Yamamoto

Minako Hamano

Program Director

Kenji Imai

System Coordinator

Kenji Nakajima

System Programmer

Yoshikazu Mori

Samus Programmer

Isamu Kubota

Event Programmer

Mitsuru Matsumoto

Enemy Programmer

Yasuhiko Fujii

Map Programmer

Motomu Chikaraishi

Assistant Programmer

Kouichi Abe

Coordinators

Katsuya Yamano

Tsutomu Kaneshige

Printed Art Work

Masafumi Sakashita

Yasuo Inoue

Mary Cocoma

Yusuke Nakano

Shinya Sano

Noriyuki Sato

Special Thanks To

Dan Owsen

George Sinfield

Keiko Tamura

Masaru Okada

Takahiro Harada

Kohta Fukui

Keisuke Terasaki

Masaru Yamanaka

Hitoshi Yamagamilsao Hirano

Nobuhiro Ozaki

Kenichi Nakamura

Takehiko Hosokawa

Satoshi Matsumura

Takeshi Nagareda

Masahiro Kawano

Hiro Yamada

And All Of R&D1 Staffs

General Manager

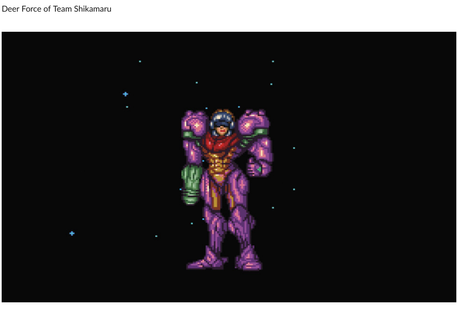
Gunpei Yokoi

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi

Produced By

Deer Force of Team Shikamaru



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox
Overview

DEVELOPER

Nintendo EAD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: February 21, 1993

NA: March 26, 1993

EU: June 3, 1993

Origin of the Lylatian Conflict

The Lylat solar system, located near the center of the Milky Way galaxy, is made up of several bountiful planets. No fewer than three of these worlds were home to civilizations teeming with Industrious Inhabitants. The other planets in the system provided boundless natural resources. The comfortable lifestyle enjoyed by the Lylatians was the envy of the galaxy, until the coming of the Emperor Andross.

Emperor Andross was once known as Doctor Andross, a scientific genius who worked at an advanced lab on Corneria, the fourth planet in the Lylat system. Ever since childhood, Andross's brilliance outshone that of other children. As an adult, Dr. Andross began developing a powerful engine based on hyper-spatial energy. Selfish and blinded by ambition, he repeatedly conducted dangerous experiments in the heart of Corneria's most populated city. After many warnings from the planet's ruling council, he was finally banished for endangering the Inhabitants of Corneria.

Out of sight, out of mind. The Inhabitants of Corneria soon forgot the menace of "Dr. Andross". One day, however, Corneria's small defense force detected some unusual happenings on Venom, the first planet in the Lylat system. Strange unidentified flying objects were monitored maneuvering above the planet in large numbers. It was not long before the self-appointed Emperor Andross, who had fled to Venom, declared war on Corneria.

The planet Venom had been completely remade by Emperor Andross into a gigantic military base. Andross hoped that with his military power, he could soon control all the planets in the Lylat system. General Pepper, the commanding officer of Corneria's defense force, decided to dispatch the super-high-performance combat ship ARWING to the defense of the planet, even though it was in the prototype stage of development. Because of the urgency of the threat to Corneria, however, he did not have time to train pilots for these advanced fighters.

"We need the Star Fox Team!!"

This is the call sent out by General Pepper. You are Fox McCloud, leader of the Star Fox team, a group of adventurers with outstanding combat skill. Your mission is to penetrate the defenses of the planet Venom and defeat the forces led by Emperor Andross. Your ability to maneuver the ARWING fighter will make the difference between the return of peace to the Lylat system and the fall of Corneria to the evil Emperor. As a team leader, you are also responsible for the safe return of your Star Fox teammates.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox
Development

Yet another legendary 16-bit title from Nintendo's Entertainment Analysis & Development (EAD) division, *Star Fox* was co-developed by Argonaut Software, who had previously worked on the 1986 combat flight simulator, *Starglider*. The team at Argonaut got their foot in the door with Nintendo due to the latter company's interest in 3D, and the former's increasing expertise in the same field. At the time, the dawn of 3D was trending across arcade and personal computer games, though even low-end PCs were far too cost-prohibitive for the mainstream. To put cutting-edge 3D into a home console was unheard of, so, naturally, Nintendo intended to do it.

Following a number of tech demos displaying Argonaut's technological prowess—one of which would go on to become 1992's *X* for the Game Boy, the first ever 3D game for a handheld system—the small, UK-based developer relocated key members of its team to Japan to work closely on *Star Fox* at Nintendo's HQ. As the story goes, the move was meant to be temporary, but eventually ended up stretching over the length of development and beyond, with at least one former Argonaut member, programmer Dylan Cuthbert, still residing in Kyoto to this day.

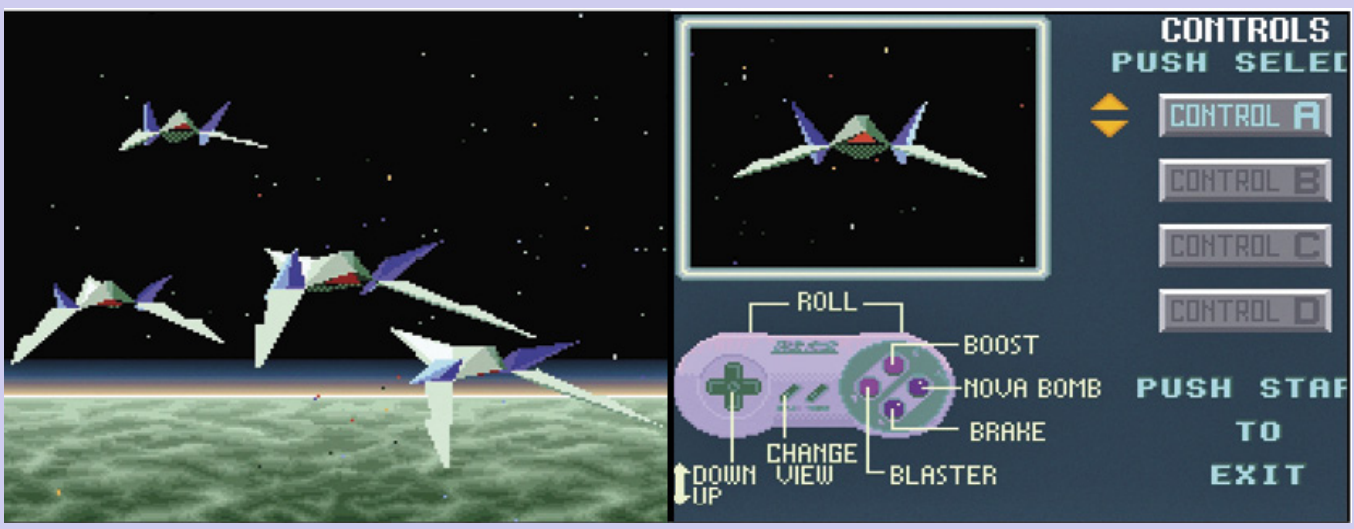
Because the onboard hardware of the Super NES was too limited to achieve the type of 3D Nintendo was aiming for, Argonaut was permitted to design custom hardware to improve its 3D capabilities. That hardware was the Super FX chip, the world's first 3D graphics processing unit (GPU) in a consumer product. And because the SNES used cartridges, it was possible to include the additional hardware in each Game Pak, rather than requiring an upgraded console or expensive add-on.

Programming was primarily handled by Argonaut, while Nintendo was responsible for much of the game's creative direction. Game design is largely credited to producer Shigeru Miyamoto, with characters designed by Takaya Imamura, music composed by Hajime Hirasawa, and Katsuya Eguchi serving as director. Mr. Eguchi most notably went on to create the *Animal Crossing* series, as well as to direct *Star Fox 2*.

Star Fox's gameplay was heavily inspired by arcade games such as *Starblade* and *Solvalou*. Thematically, *Star Wars* impacted development as well, and both franchises share a few notable parallels. For instance, flying inside large enemy aircraft and blowing them up from within is a recurring element in both *Star Fox* and *Star Wars*.

The smooth on-rails shooting was aided by the improved visuals. Whereas other 3D shooters up to that point were primarily vector-based, *Star Fox* filled in the wireframes with texture-less polygons, allowing the on-screen action to literally take shape in a way rarely seen at the time. The game may appear crude by modern standards, but upon its release it was truly a bleeding-edge product.

ARWING



In the same way the original *Super Mario Bros.* used clashing colors and exaggerated features to depict its titular hero, the simplistic design of the Arwing partially came about due to hardware limitations. "Back then, with the Super Famicom system, you couldn't display complicated shapes, only simple ones," Mr. Miyamoto explained during an Iwata Asks segment for *Star Fox 64 3D*, noting that the only choice was a triangular shape. "We called it Arwing because it was like one big wing shaped like an 'A'."

But the simplest things are often the most memorable, and the angular two-tone design helps the Arwing stand out when the screen starts to get crowded.

In 2011, to promote the release of *Star Fox 64 3D*, Nintendo president and CEO Satoru Iwata held a roundtable discussion with longtime series producer, Mr. Miyamoto, and Mr. Cuthbert, who had coded both *Star Fox* and *Star Fox 2* before going on to start his own company, Q-Games, which developed both *Star Fox Command* for the Nintendo DS, and *Star Fox 64 3D* for the Nintendo 3DS. During this conversation, Mr. Miyamoto explained the original inspiration behind the character concepts for the *Star Fox* universe. He wanted to avoid familiar faces commonly seen in science fiction, so it was decided to use anthropomorphized animals. "Most of the sci-fi in Japan back then was robot anime, superheroes and monsters, but I wasn't interested in doing the same thing," Mr. Miyamoto stated. "I had been drawing animal characters for a long time, so I suggested animal characters to Imamura-san. He was surprised." Mr. Miyamoto laughed, continuing, "We were like, 'But animal characters in a shooting game?' and then, 'That's precisely why it would have impact!' and started thinking about which animals to use."

As is often the case with Mr. Miyamoto, he used his surroundings to guide his inspiration. "*Star Fox* has a lot of scenes in which the [player] goes through arches, which reminds one of the gates at Shinto shrines called torii. And torii made me think of the thousands of such gates at Fushimi Inari Taisha." Fushimi Inari Taisha is the most notable shrine dedicated to the god Inari in all of Japan. Its labyrinthine paths are lined with hundreds of torii gates and statues of Fushimi Inari, who is depicted as a fox. "Fushimi Inari Taisha is about a 15-minute walk from our former head office," Mr. Miyamoto continued, "and there used to be a boys' baseball team in the area called the Inari Foxes. I thought, 'Foxes! Now that's cool!'"

"Some people back then said it would have been cooler with robots," Mr. Miyamoto remembered. "But at the time, since lots of representative hit sci-fi works like *Star Wars* and *Mobile Suit Gundam* had already come out, what was most important to me was creating our own original science fiction. I didn't want to just make a video game version of existing sci-fi. So a fox was the only way to go!"

In a 1993 interview archived on Japanese website *GSLA*, which preserves interviews from defunct print sources, Mr. Miyamoto explained that *Star Fox* was at one time considered a solo act. "The truth is we didn't want to add any characters either, but the backstory had you flying with companion pilots, so we added them to the game with the same colored ship. Gradually we came to give them names, one by one. The reason we added companion pilots is, to put it simply, that flying with other ships is fun," Mr. Miyamoto stated, delving deeper into the team's thought process at the time. "In order to show how you yourself are flying on the screen, companions are needed. There's been lots of [shooting games] where the goal is just to beat the game, but as I thought about ways to add a little bit more drama to the action, I realized that companions were a big part of that. When you beat *Star Fox* and watch the ending, I hope some players stop and think, 'My companions are gone, scattered to the corners of the cosmos...' It's like you now have a memory of having accomplished something together."

These three puppets were created to support Star Fox Zero on the Wii U at a recent E3.

And so, Takaya Imamura went about providing companions for Fox, further taking inspiration from Japanese folklore: Peppy, a hare, and Falco, a bird. The Cornerian army was populated with dogs and the enemy army with monkeys, inspired by a popular Japanese saying about dogs and monkeys fighting. In the US, a similar phrase is used, but with cats in the place of the less-common monkey. The leader of the Cornerian Army, General Pepper, and the main villain, Andross, also follow the dog and monkey dynamic, respectively.

But what about Slippy, the toad? His origin was slightly less mystical. "Oh, right!" Mr. Miyamoto recalled to Mr. Iwata. "There was a staff member who used a toad like a personal mascot, always writing, 'Ribbit, ribbit!' and such on memos." This got a good laugh out of all in attendance, but the identity of the now-legendary frogman was not revealed.

The initial promotional materials for *Star Fox* featured actual puppet versions of the main characters. Mr. Miyamoto drew a great deal of inspiration from what he referred to as "English puppet drama," citing *Thunderbirds* specifically. "Back when we released it, I imagined *Star Fox* selling a lot and the company that produced *Thunderbirds* coming all the way from England for negotiations to adapt it into a puppet drama," he said. "And then I would say, 'To be honest, I've always loved *Thunderbirds*.' Licensing it out by saying so was a dream of mine. And that's all it ever was," Mr. Miyamoto stated, with another laugh erupting from Mr. Iwata, Mr. Cuthbert, and the rest of the *Star Fox 64 3D* team. Although the box art and marketing for later *Star Fox* releases eschewed the live puppets, their speech animations were made intentionally jerky to pay homage to their marionette roots.

Fox McCloud

> "All ships check in!!"

Slippy Toad

> "Hey! It's me, Slippy!"

Falco Lombardi

> "Mind your own business, Fox!"

Peppy Hare

> "Retros!! Fire retros!!"

General Pepper

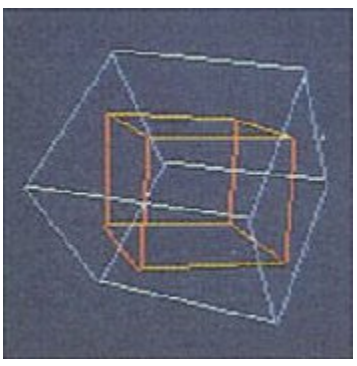
> "Good luck!"

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox

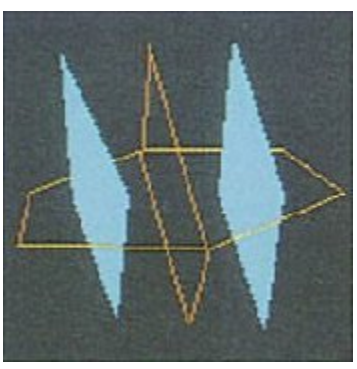
Items

Star Fox's core gameplay focuses primarily on skill over collecting a myriad of upgrades and power-ups, but there are a few key items.



Power Shield

The Power Shield grants temporary invulnerability.

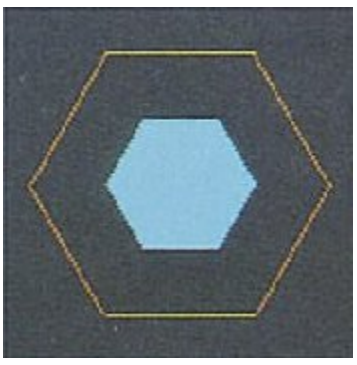


Twin Blaster Type A / B

This key item doubles the amount of Blaster beams that can be fired simultaneously. If you already have Twin Blaster Type A and pick up another of these items, you gain the Twin Blaster Type B, which is even more powerful.

Wing Gyro

If your ship is damaged, this item repairs your wings instead of providing a Twin Blaster upgrade.



Nova Bomb

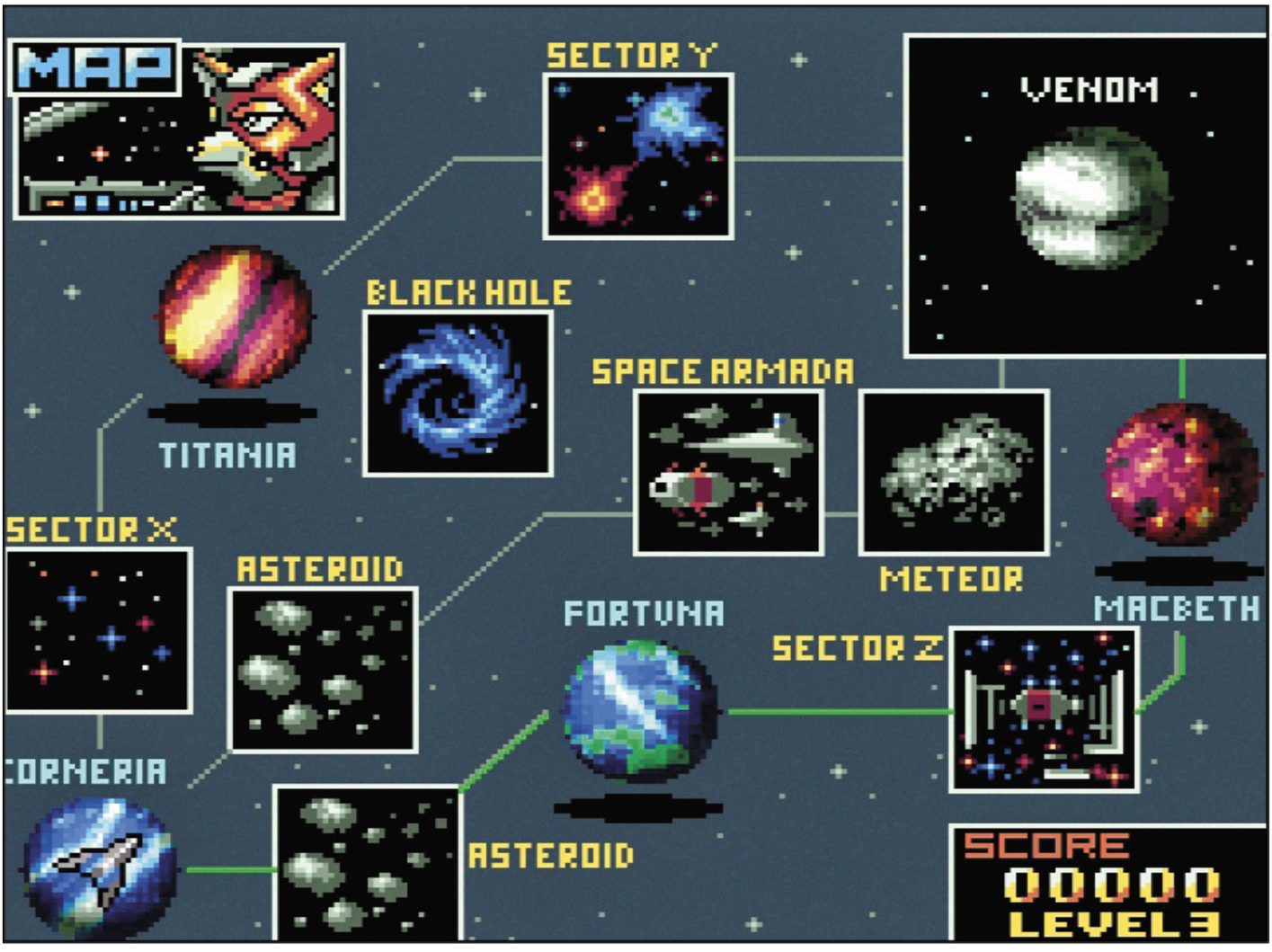
Nova Bombs create a screen-clearing explosion when outnumbered, and can help quickly take out certain bosses. The Arwing can carry a maximum of five at a time.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox

Courses Overview

There are three courses in *Star Fox* (sometimes interchangeably referred to as “levels”), each representing increased difficulty and featuring new stages, obstacles, and bosses.

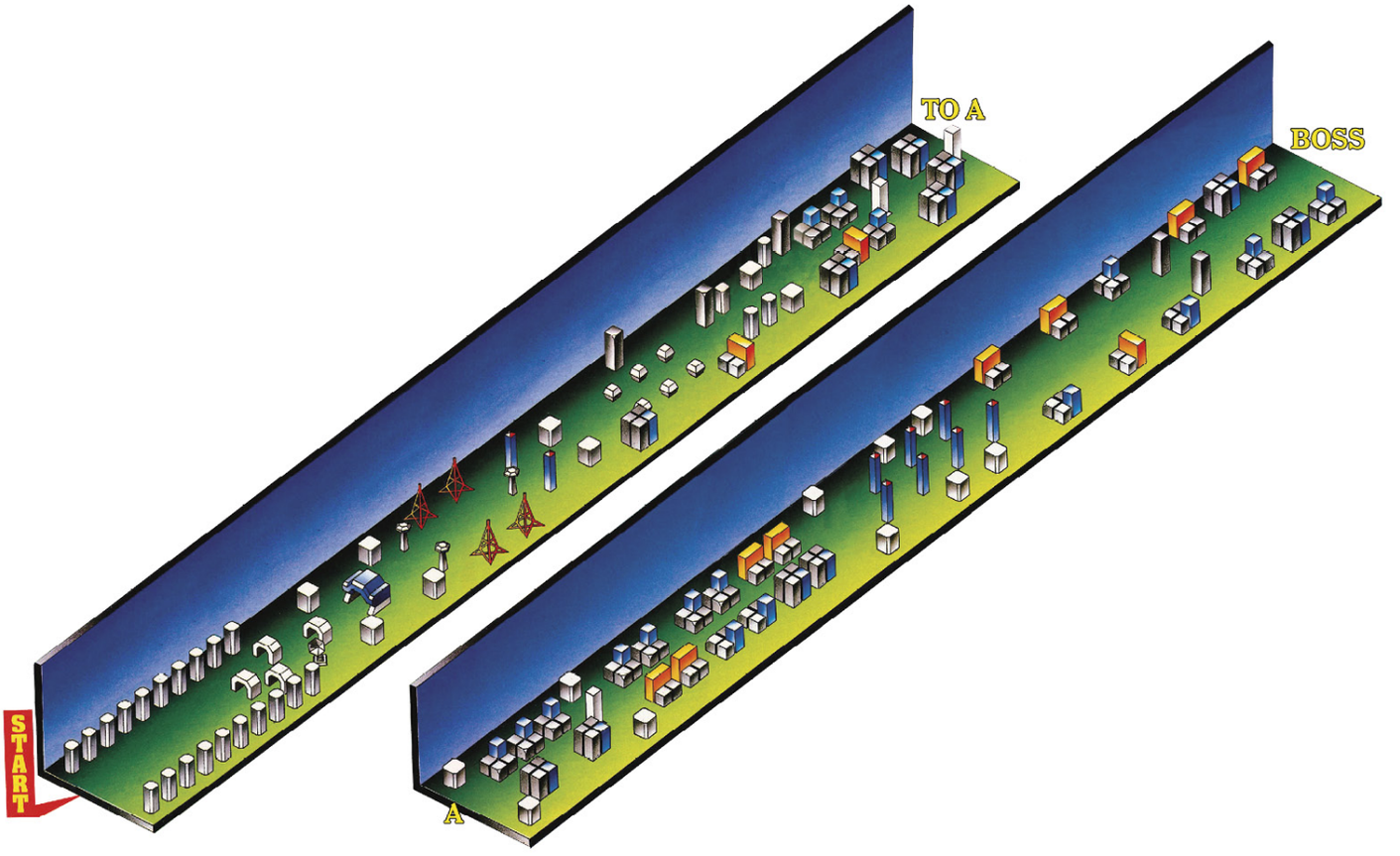


Planet IV: Corneria

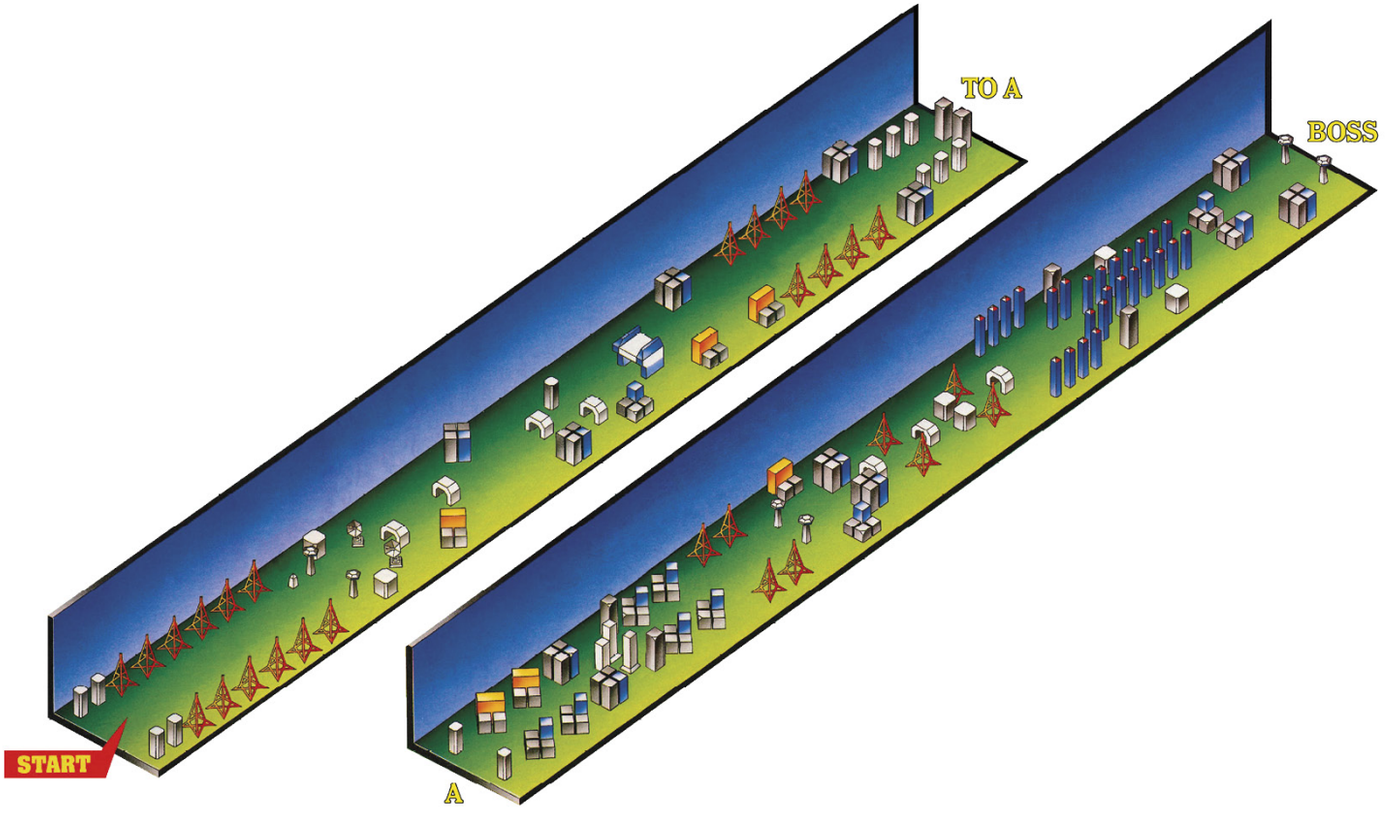
The planets featured in *Star Fox* were given rich backstories and further developed as the series progressed. Corneria, the game’s starting level, is known as the “bread basket” of the Lylat System. Home to 85% of the system’s sentient population, as well as the center for culture and politics, Corneria is an Earth-like farming world whose geology consists of endless caves and tunnels. The mostly peace-seeking population uses this labyrinthine system as shelter during times of war, having built entire cities underground. Due to the planet’s valuable resources, and the presence of the Cornerian Army, conquest over Corneria is Andross’ primary objective.

Corneria and Venom are the only planets repeated across all three courses. These dioramas, resurrected from the pages of

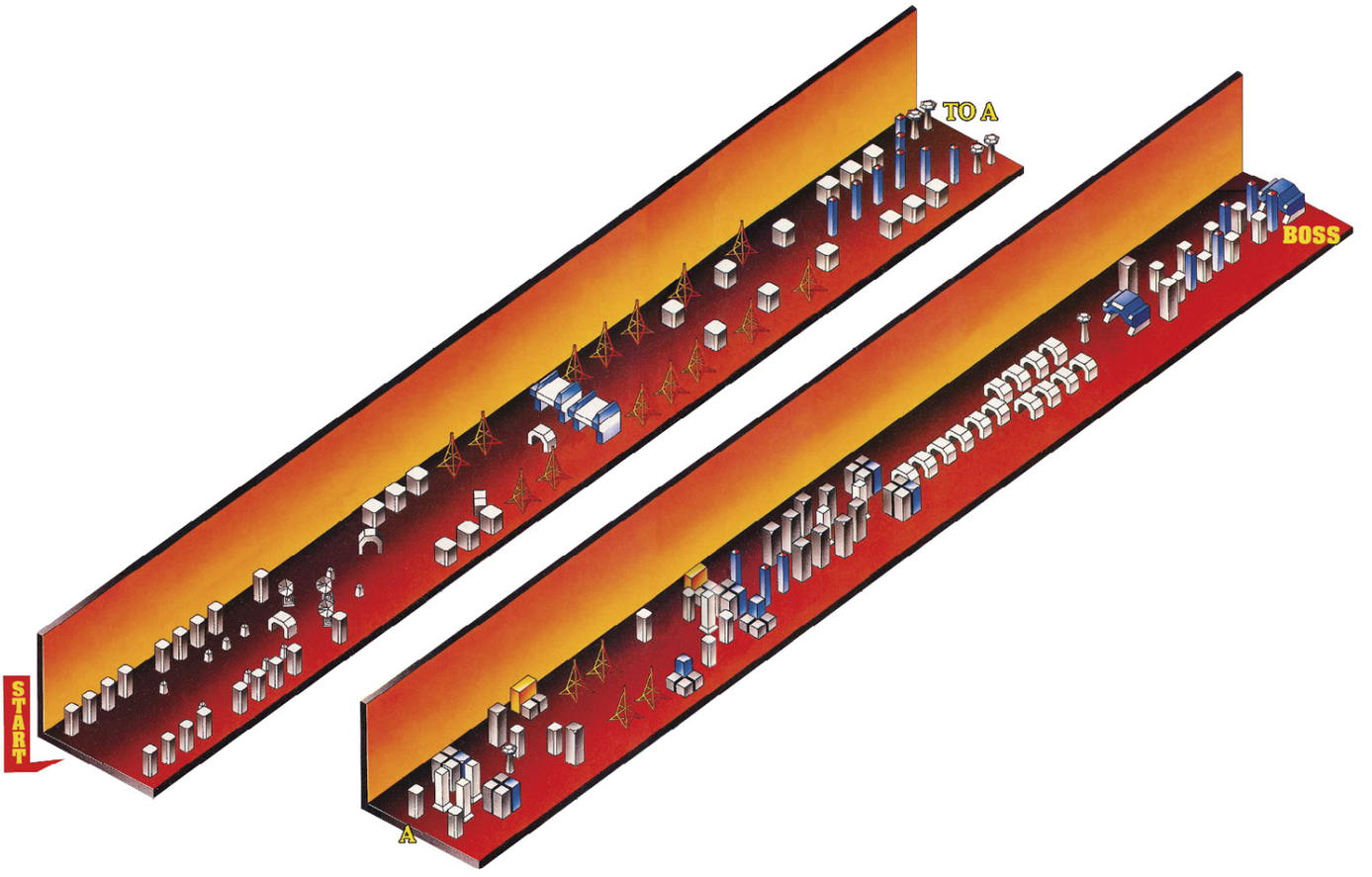
Nintendo Power, provide a unique vantage point of Corneria's progressively more challenging variations.



1-1 Corneria



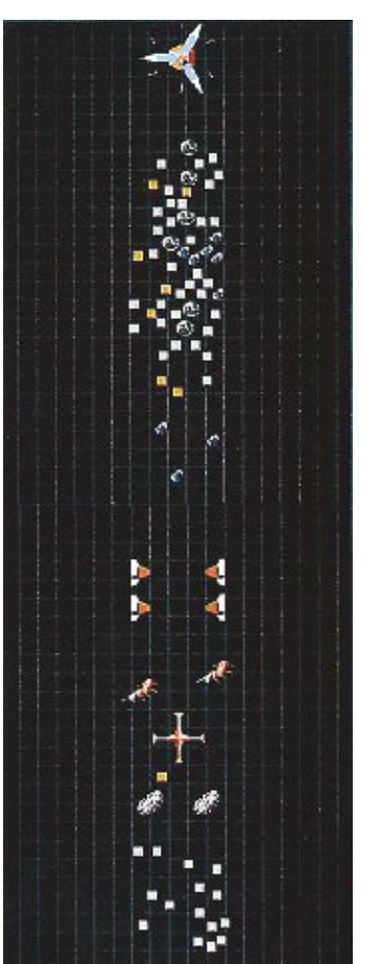
2-1 Corneria

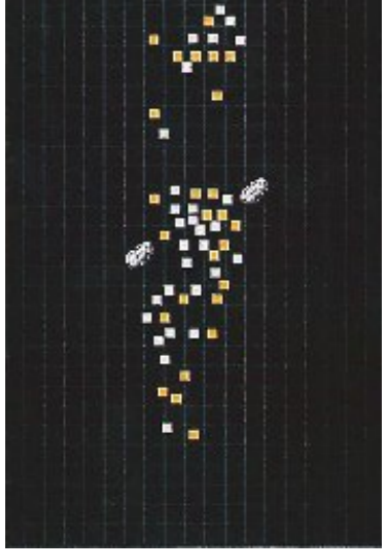


3-1 Corneria

Course 3

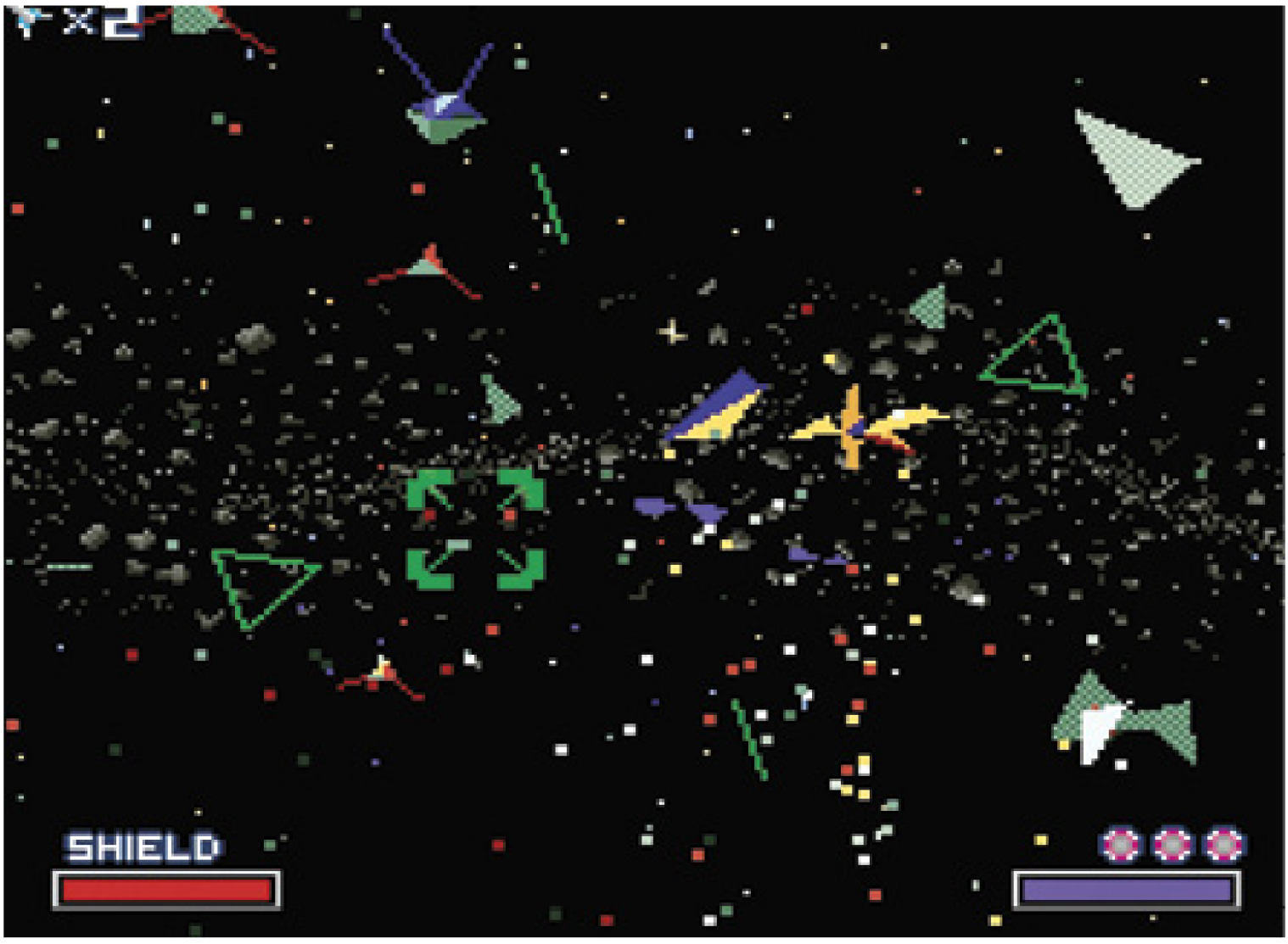
Course 3 is the ultimate test of a *Star Fox* player's skills and deftly demonstrates the game's diverse locales—from the vast expanses of endless space to the disparate surfaces of the oceanic Fortuna and the volcanic Macbeth.





3-2 Asteroids

The Asteroid Field appears in two courses. The density of mineral-rich planetoids in the area makes space travel highly ill-advised. Cornerian scientists speculate the Asteroid Field, also known as Meteo in later games, is all that remains of an erstwhile planet within the Lylat System.



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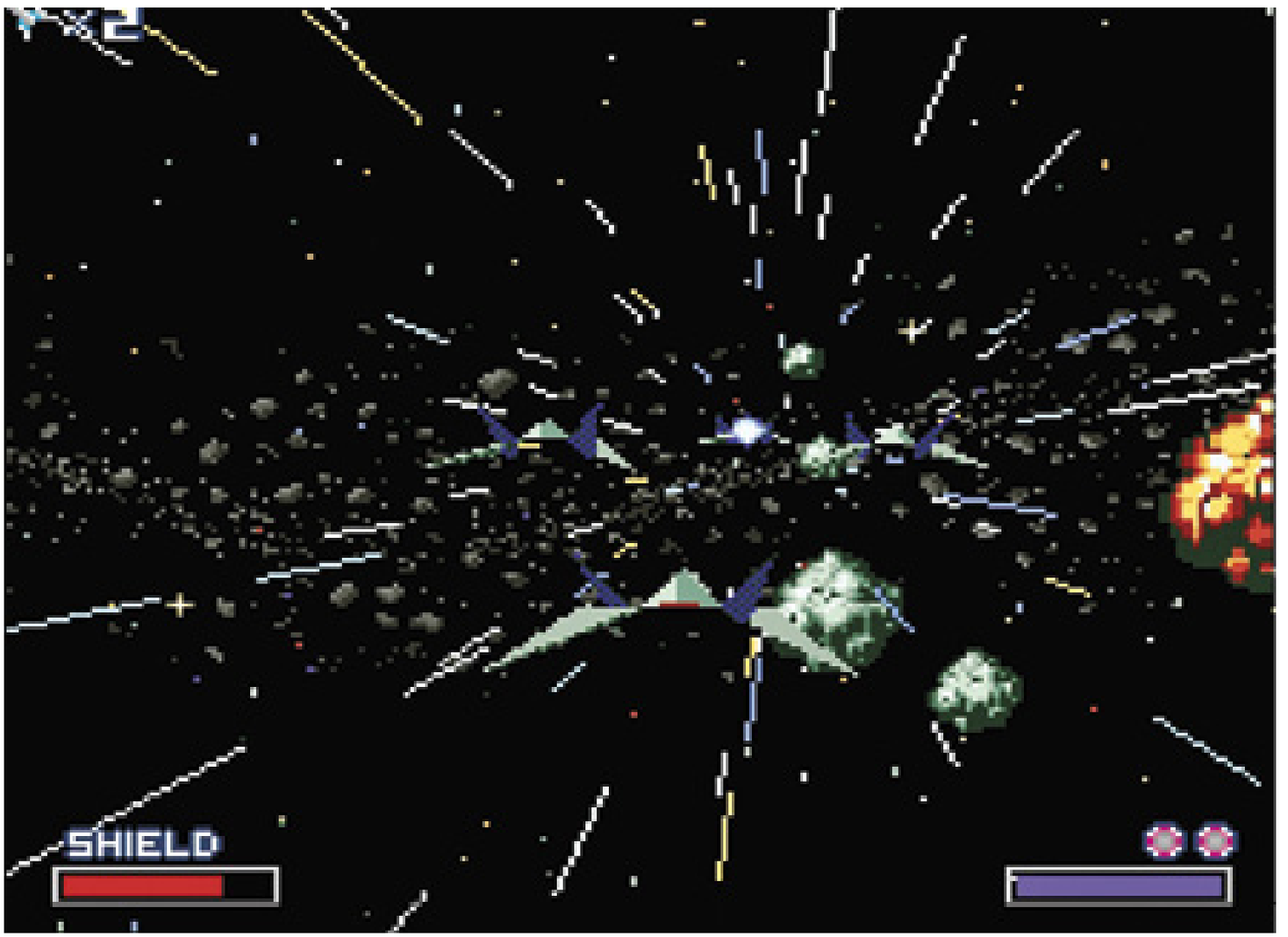
SHIELD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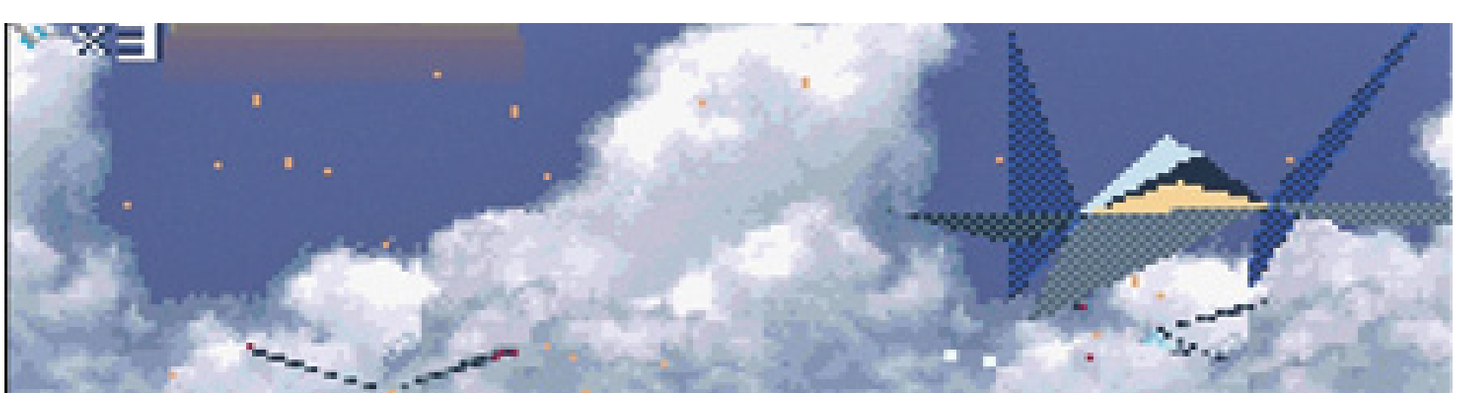
SHIELD

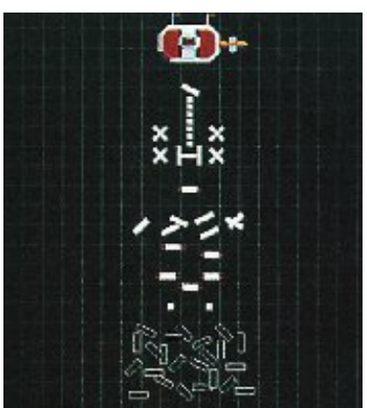
3-3 Fortuna

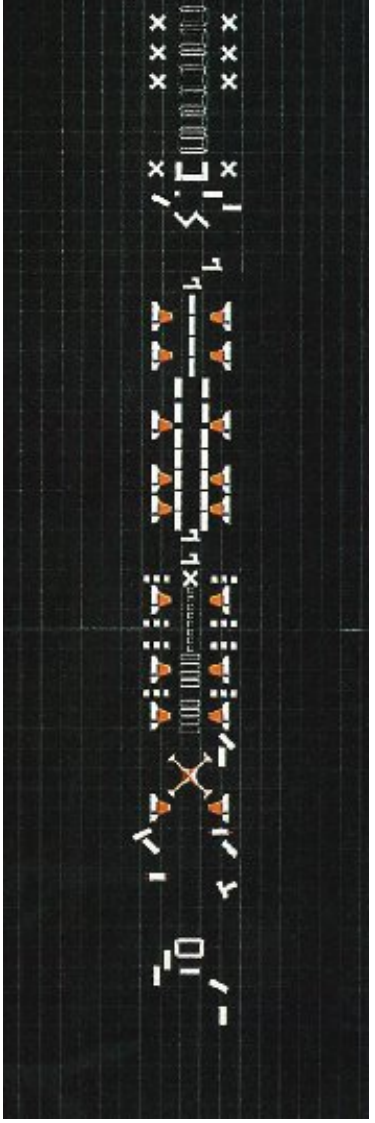
A beautiful but brutal world filled with vicious aerial and aquatic creatures, Fortuna provides an extraordinary break from the otherwise technology-laden locales. The stage's boss, a colossal two-headed dragon, was tamed by Andross and turned into a living weapon with powers exceeding state-of-the-art munitions.



SHIELD
BOGEY ON MY SIX!!

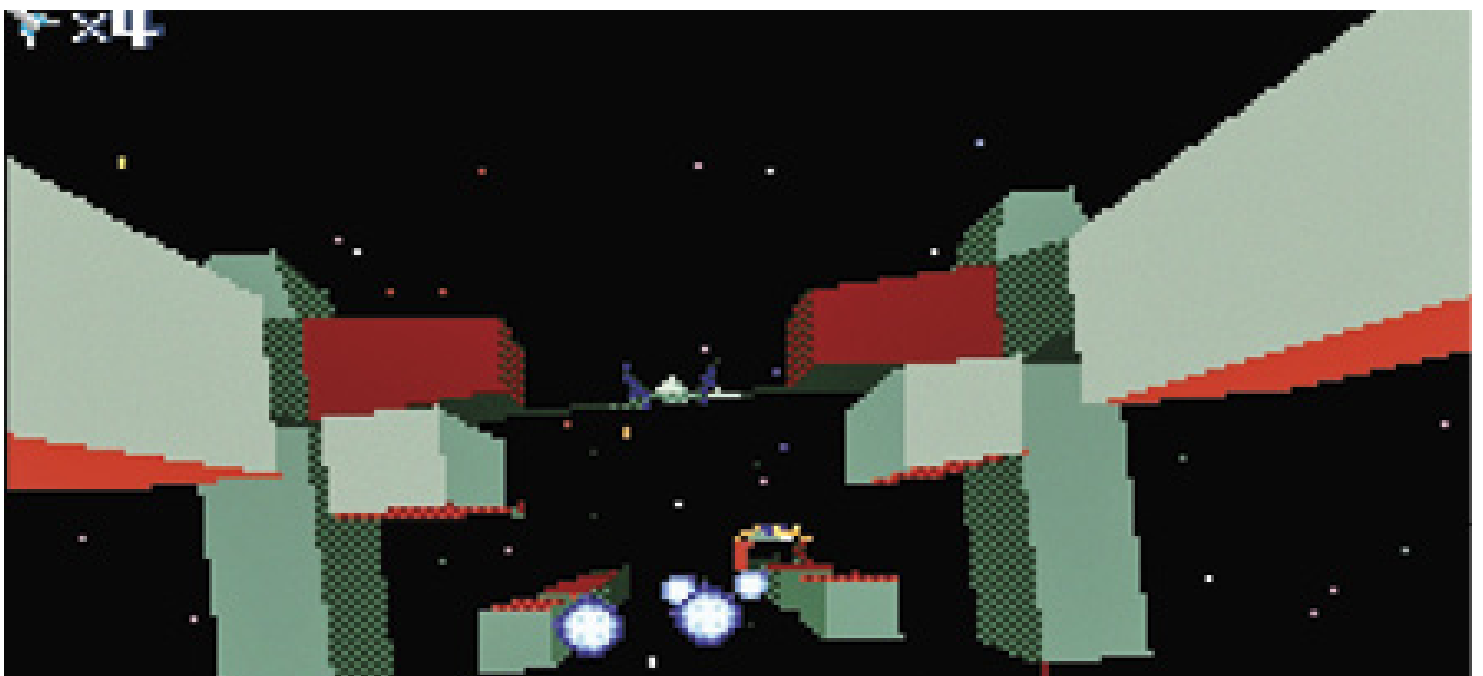
SHIELD
WATCH YOUR AIM,
FOX!!



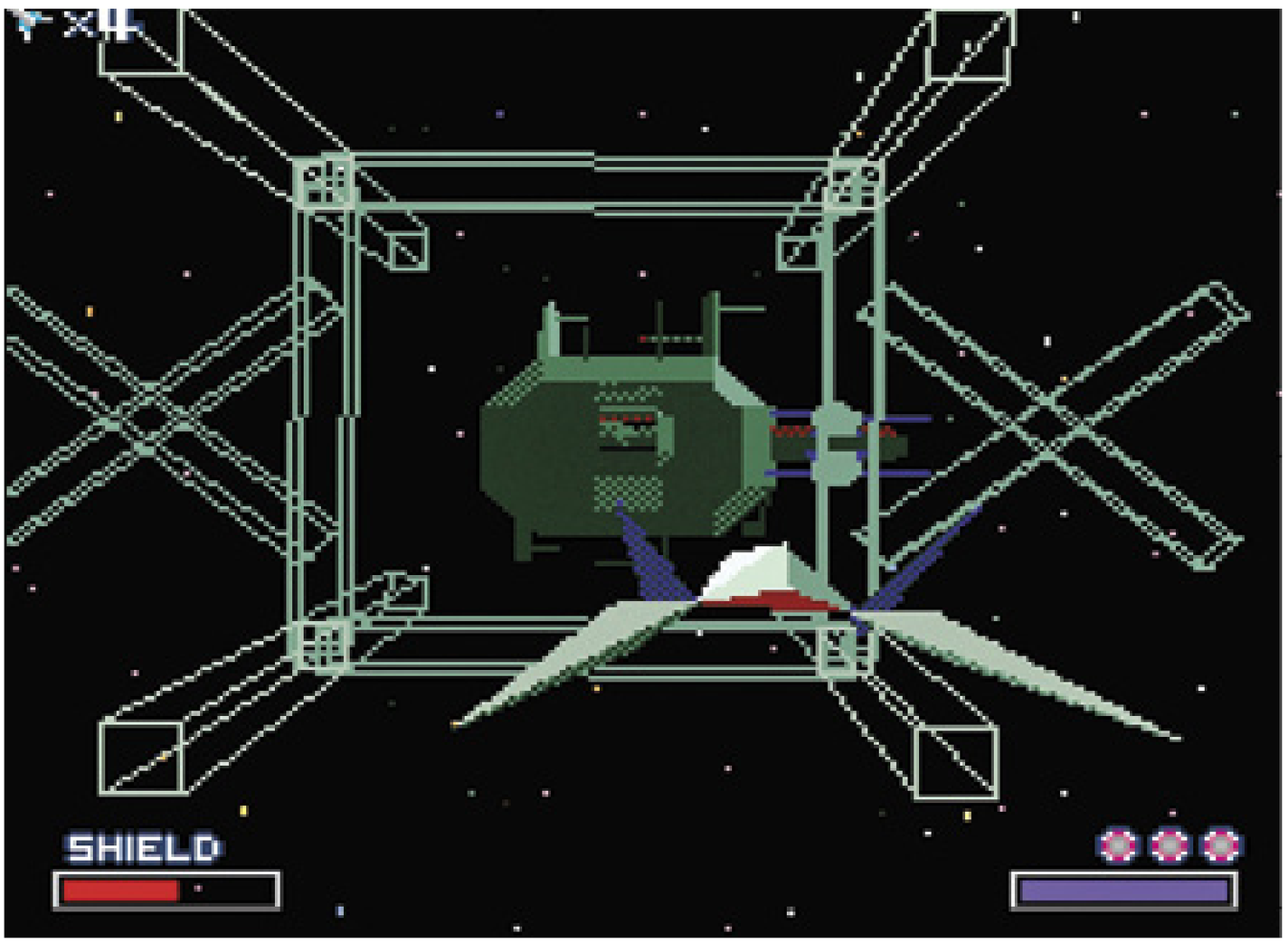


3-4 Sector Z

There are three “Sector” nebulae that appear in the shape of the letter for which they are named. Sector X and Y are found on Course 2. While Sector Y is a somewhat calmer endeavor, Sectors X and Z are extremely challenging obstacle courses consisting of numerous rotating beams and other debris left behind from previous battles. Due to the dangerous traversal and high damage caused by debris collision, Sector Z is regarded as one of the most difficult locations in the series.



YEAH!! THANKS!!
SHIELD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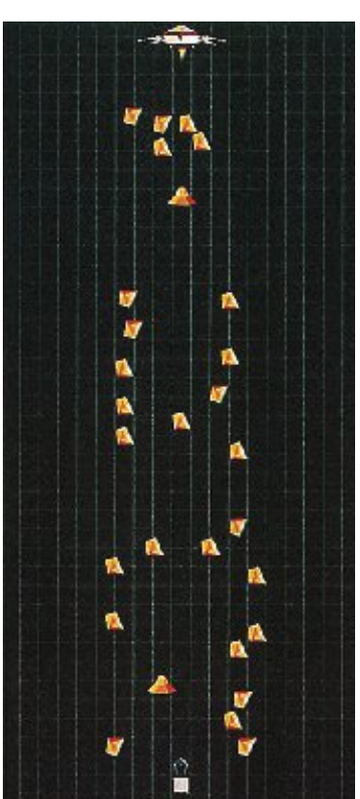
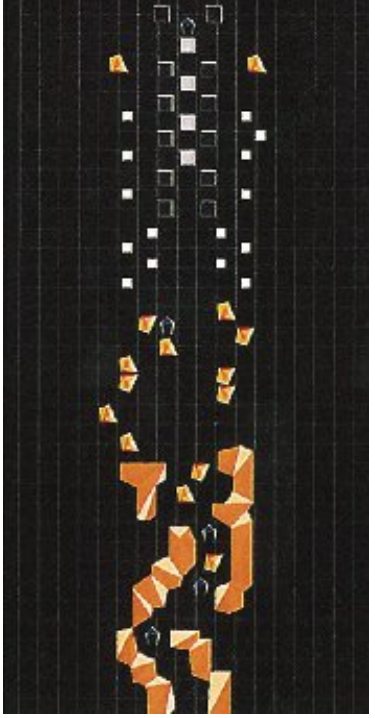


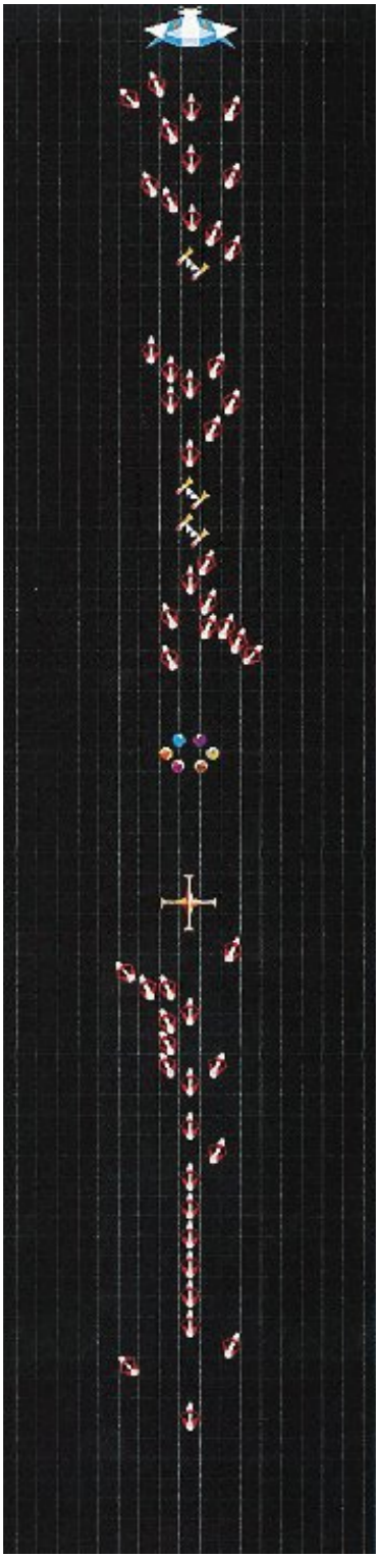


3-5 Macbeth

Macbeth's dense atmosphere and active volcanoes have colored the world crimson (though later games would re-color it green). Shaped by a long history of geological disasters, Andross uses the planet's hollow crust to stockpile his force's weaponry.

×4
SHIELD

×4
SHIELD
MIND YOUR OWN
BUSINESS, FOX!!



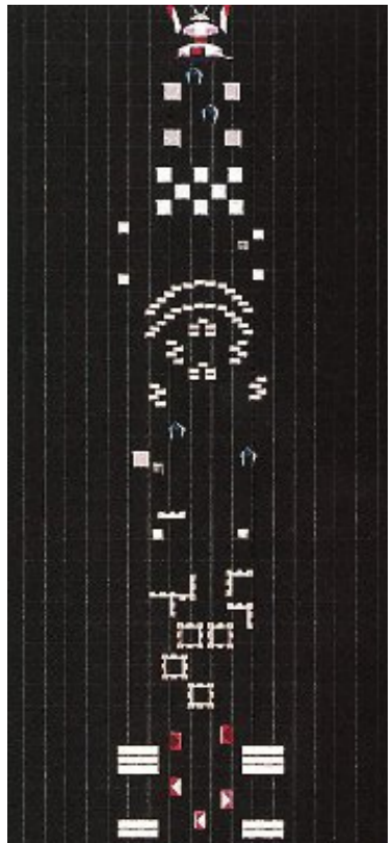
3-6 Venom Orbit

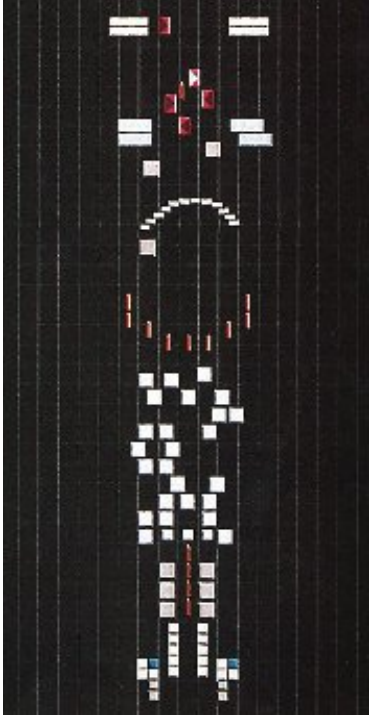
Before taking the fight to Andross' base, one last space battle must be won within the planet's orbital airspace.

SHIELD

×4
SHIELD

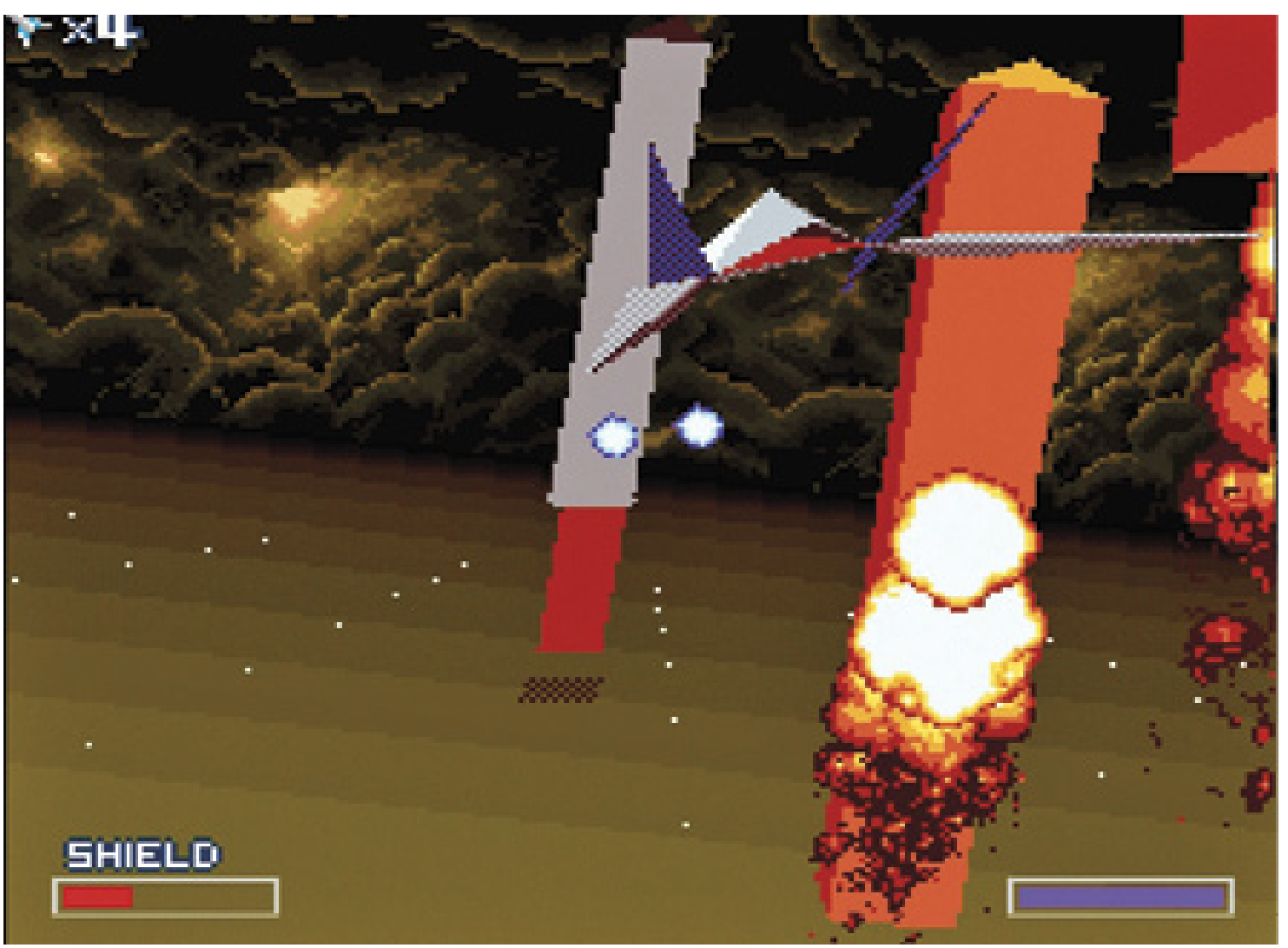
x4
SHIELD

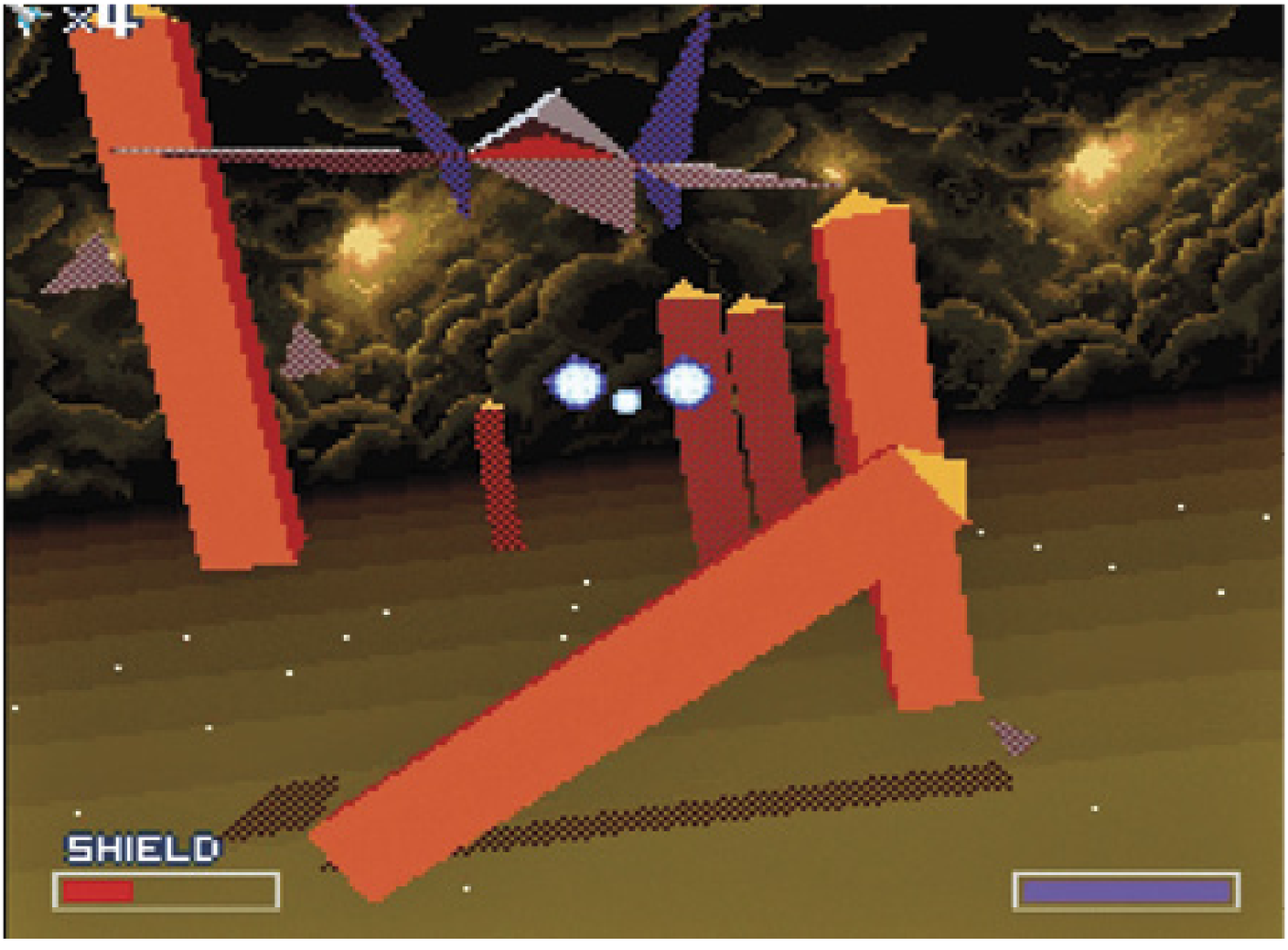




3-7 Venom Base

Regardless of the course, the game's final stage starts with a dramatic downward spiral onto the stormy surface of Venom, the accompanying soundtrack signaling the epic climax to Fox's adventure. Having enslaved the natives of Venom, Andross has darkened the skies with pollution from the construction of his military machines.





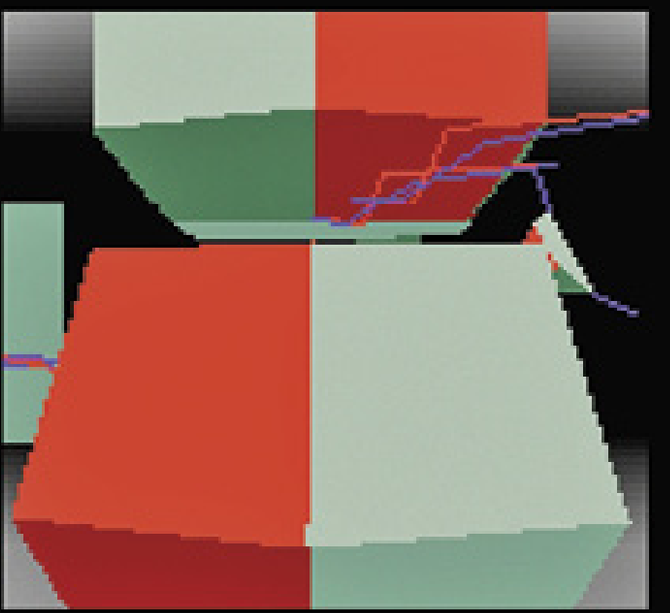
Bosses

Each course in *Star Fox* concludes with a confrontation against a screen-filling boss. Unlike in future games, Fox's wingmen leave him to battle each boss alone.

LEVEL 1

SPACE

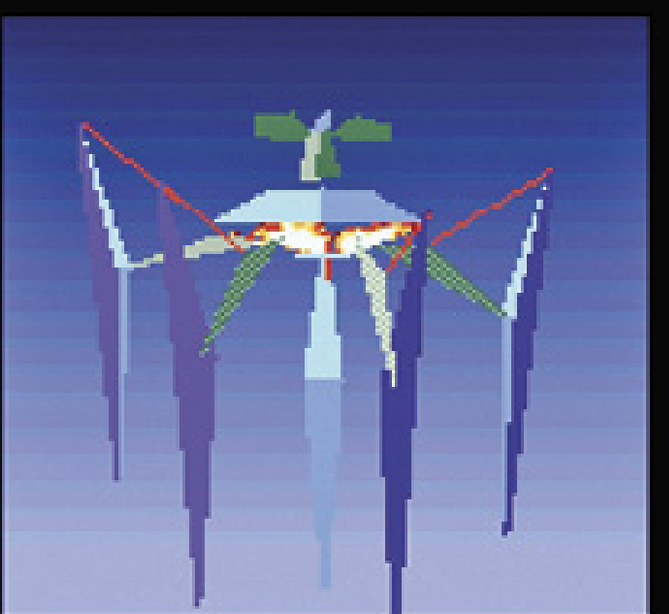
ARMADA



NAME - ATOMIC BASE
WEAPON - LASER
SIZE - H600×W850×D1200

LEVEL 1

METEOR



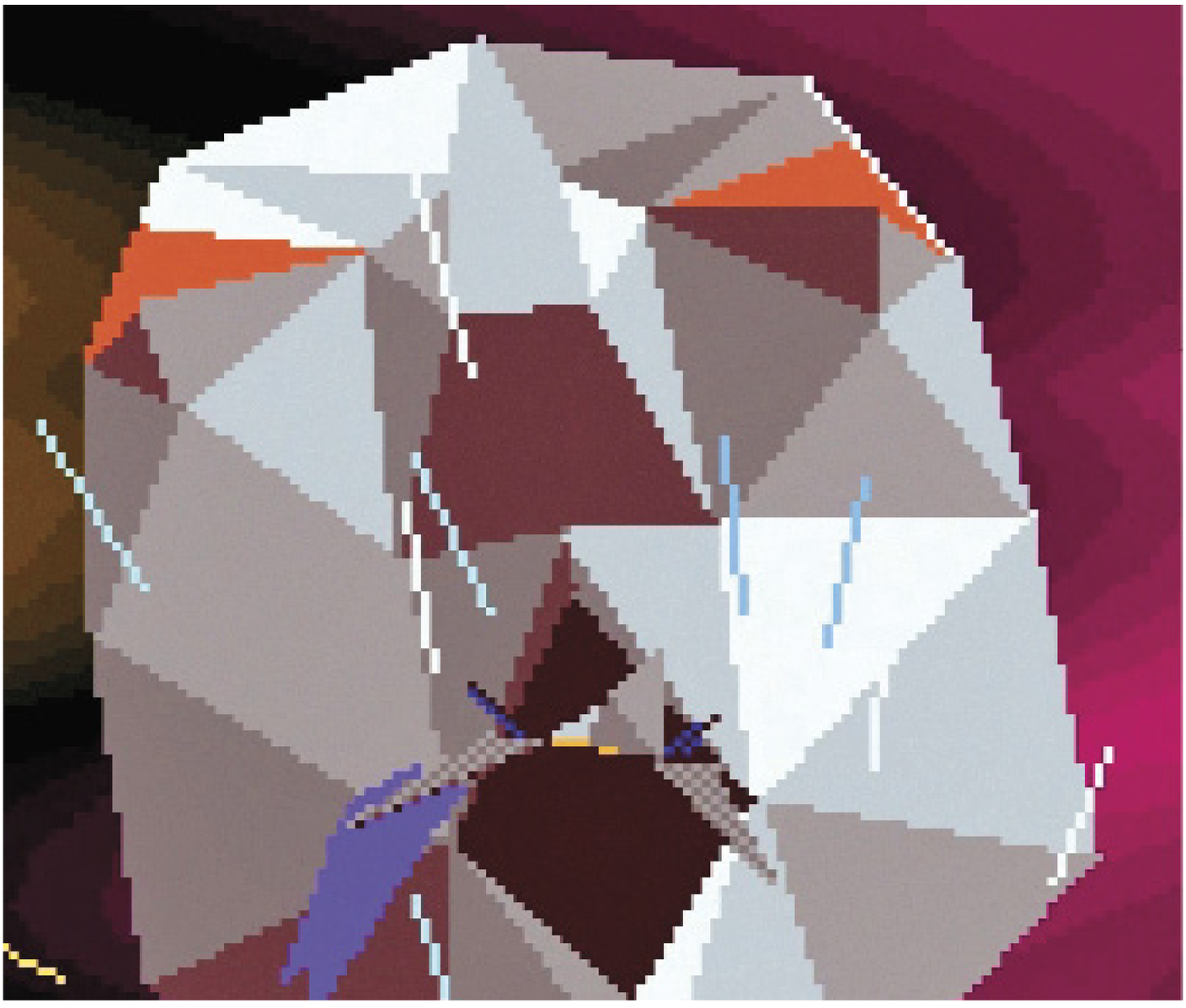
NAME - DANCING INSECTOR
WEAPON - FIRE BLASTER
SIZE - H120×W87×D72

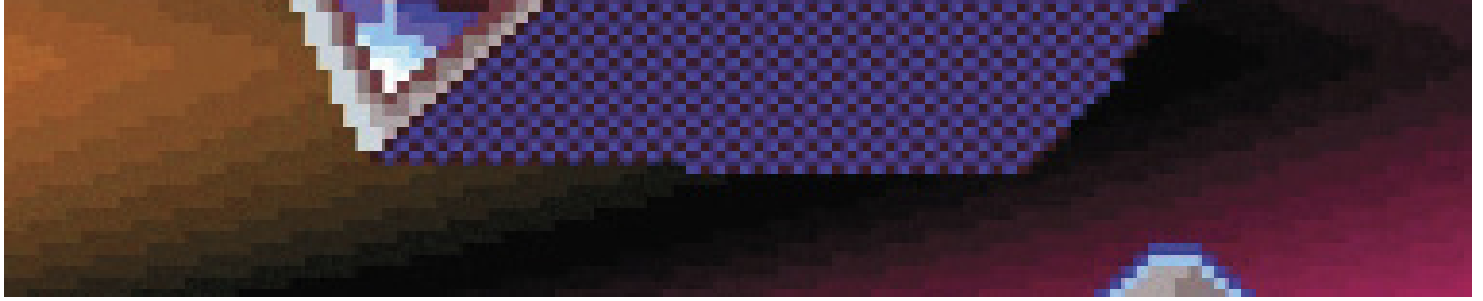
LEVEL 1
VENOM
NAME - PHANTRON
WEAPON - LASER
SIZE - H25×W22×D31

LEVEL 1
VENOM
NAME - PHANTRON
WEAPON - LASER
SIZE - H25×W22×D31

Andross

The many faces of Andross...



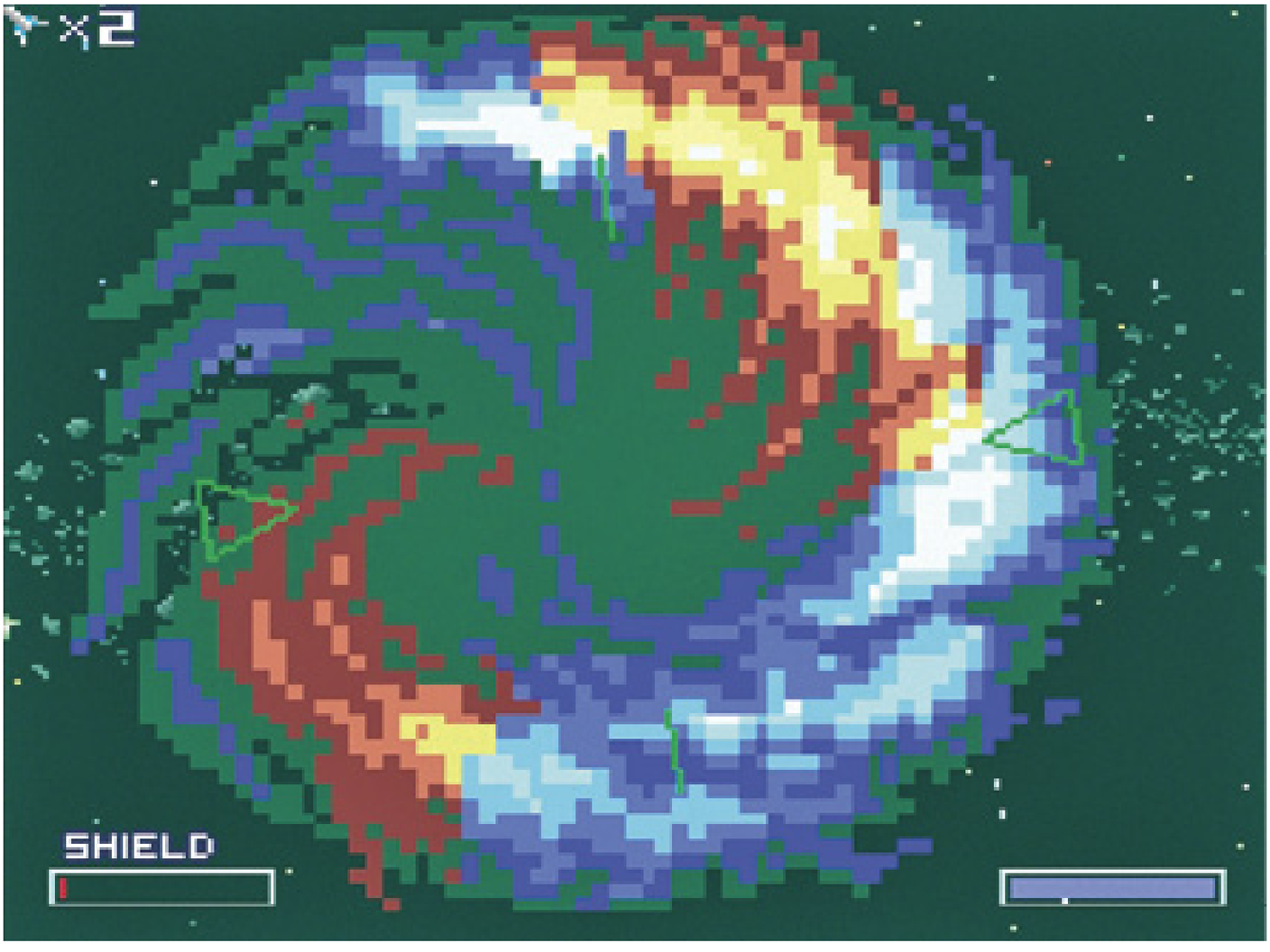


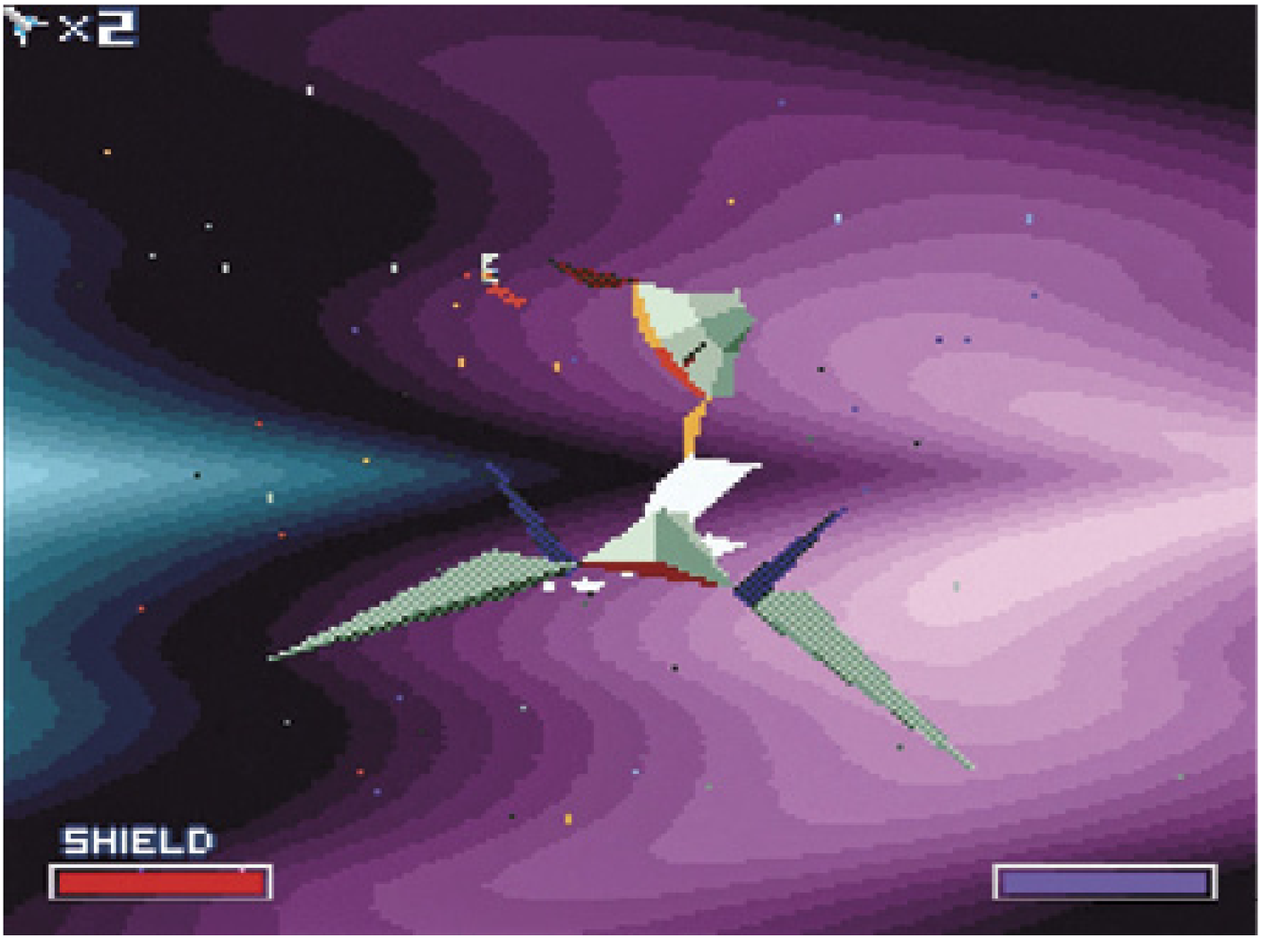
Beyond the Stars

The Lylat system is not without its secrets. Two mysterious anomalies await discovery...

Black Hole

The Awesome Black Hole, as it's called in the game, is a space graveyard filled with Andross's failed experiments. The area is filled with debris made up of pieces of enemies and bosses from throughout the game. From a story perspective, the Black Hole is said to be where Fox's father vanished.

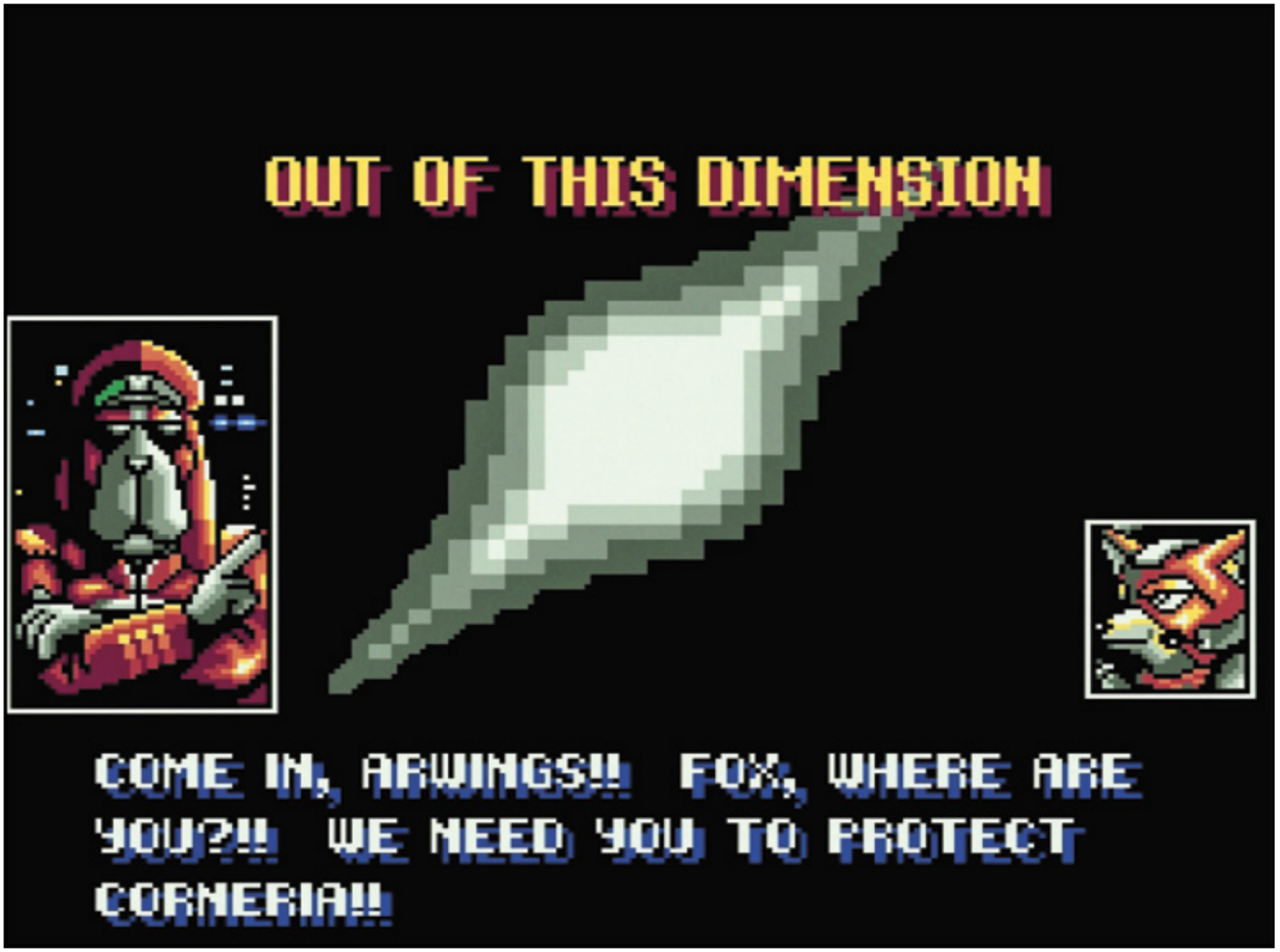




Flying through a Warp Ring in the Black Hole relocates the player to specific worlds, similar to the warp pipes in *Super Mario Bros.*

Out of This Dimension

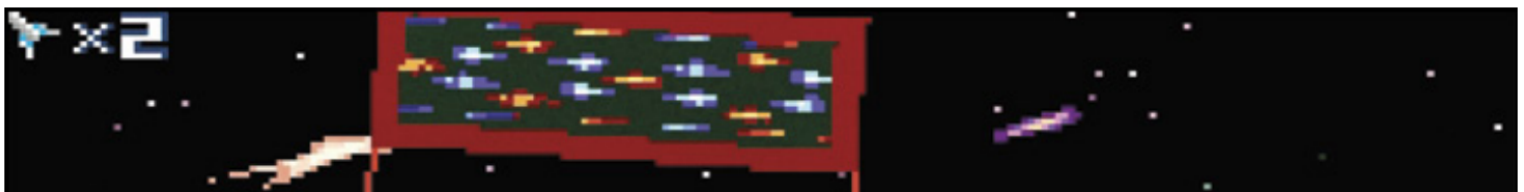
If the Black Hole was going for “cool,” Out of This Dimension was definitely going for “unusual.” This psychedelic area cannot be exited, and unlike the Black Hole, it has its own boss, which is seen as an alternate ending for the game.



To reach Out of This Dimension, players must enter the Asteroid Belt on Level 3. Destroying the second large asteroid encountered reveals a phoenix-like alien. Flying into this creature transports the Arwing to the surreal space.

Slot Machine

The true threat to the galaxy: gambling! The Slot Machine lies at the end of the Out of This Dimension area. Shooting the giant machine’s lever spins the reels. Three 7s cause the boss to self-destruct, while other combinations have different effects such as providing healing items or shooting missiles at the player.



SUPER NOSTALGIA

The thrilling adventures of the *Star Fox* team were so popular with fans that *Nintendo Power* featured their exploits in comic book form.

1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

The Japanese version of *Star Fox* showcases all four pilots in their stuffed animal forms, whereas the US box art featured Fox alone.

2 DO AN AILERON ROLL!

Peppy's "Do a barrel roll!" line has long been a pop culture catchphrase. However, the maneuver that players perform in *Star Fox* to reflect incoming enemy attacks is known as an aileron roll. The difference being that there is no discernible change in altitude when performing an aileron roll, but with a barrel roll the aircraft makes a complete rotation along both its longitudinal and lateral axes. The more you know!

3 STAR FOX MICRO

WarioWare: Smooth Moves featured a *Star Fox* micro-game that required players to pilot an Arwing through Corneria. Sector X, or Titania. R.O.B. appears as each stage's boss, using an NES Zapper to attack.

4 STAR FOX VIRTUAL BOY

A *Star Fox* tech demo made its public debut at the Winter CES in 1995 but was never turned into a complete game. *Red Alarm*, a title with similar mechanics and visuals, was released instead.

5 PARACHUTING PRE-ORDERS

Nintendo famously delivered launch copies of *Star Fox* via *Star Fox*-branded parachutes to meet the record-breaking pre-order demand for the game. These highly sought-after pieces of *Star Fox* history are still used for actual skydiving to this day.

6 STARWING

Due to potential issues with a German company, *Star Fox* was originally titled *Starwing* in the UK. After *Star Fox 64*, known as *Lylat Wars* in PAL regions, the franchise globally retained the *Star Fox* moniker for all future releases.

7 DINOSAUR PLANET

The official description for Planet Fortuna says it is also known as the "Dinosaur Planet". Near the turn of the millennium, Rare was developing an ambitious title for the Nintendo 64 called *Dinosaur Planet*. The game was eventually reworked to be *Star Fox* Adventures.

8 KRYSTAL

The four pilots from the original *Star Fox* make up the main characters of all *Star Fox* games with one exception: following the events of *Star Fox* Adventures, that game's co-protagonist, Krystal, joins the *Star Fox* crew in Peppy's place.

9 SUPER NES FX

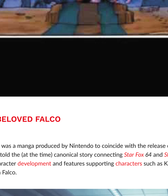
Developed too late to be included in the Super Famicom, the Super FX chip was considered for inclusion in the Super NES hardware before its launch. However, this idea was scrapped to keep the cost of the system down. Imagine a world where every SNES game had access to the same graphical possibilities as *Star Fox* and *Yoshi's Island*.

10 STAR FOX WARS

The *Star Fox* series has a number of references to the *Star Wars* films, including quotes such as, "I have a bad feeling about this!" The Official *Nintendo Power* Player's Guide to *Star Fox Assault* noted the similarities between Fox's and Falco's personalities and those of Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, respectively, and the developers have acknowledged *Star Wars* as a direct influence.

11 SUPER SMASH FOX

Fox McCloud is a recurring pugilist in *Super Smash Bros.* Falco and Star Wolf (aka Wolf O'Donnell) also make appearances in select *Smash Bros.* titles.



12 WEEKEND COMPETITION

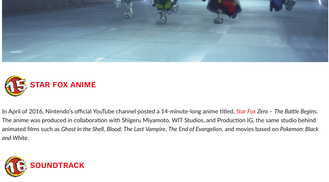
The Super *Star Fox* Weekend competition was an international event promoting the launch of *Star Fox*. Held at over 1,500 locations such as Macy's and various toy stores in the US alone, the competition used a special cartridge with timed gameplay, logging each player's total score after four minutes. The stages in the Super *Star Fox* Weekend were remixed to feature more enemies and obstacles, and displayed score gains in the game world, unlike the retail version of *Star Fox*.

Players who scored the highest at each location were awarded various prizes, such as pins and apparel, including a leather jacket for the top player. A random grand prize winner was then selected out of all the top players from every location and awarded either an all-expenses-paid trip for four to London, Paris, Sydney, or Tokyo, or a lump sum of $15,000. The winner, from Texas, opted for the cash.

Items from this event, along with the special yellow aprons worn by employees during the competition, have long been extremely rare collectors' items.

13 GAME WATCH

Alongsidethe release of *Star Fox*, Nintendo partnered with Kellogg's and Nelsonics include an LCD-based *Star Fox* Game Watch for purchasers of Corn Flakes cereal. A promotional order form in each box needed to be mailed to receive the watch, which included four stages and the Attack Carrier boss.



14 FAREWELL, BELOVED FALCO

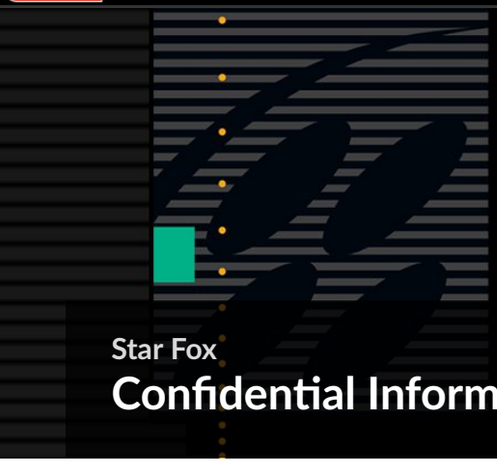
Star Fox: Farewell, Beloved Falco was a manga produced by Nintendo to coincide with the release of *Star Fox Adventures*. It focuses primarily on Falco and told the (at the time) canonical story connecting *Star Fox 64* and *Star Fox Adventures*. The manga includes a lot of interesting character development and features supporting characters such as Katt Monroe, who has an unrequited romantic interest in Falco.

15 STAR FOX ANIME

In April of 2016, Nintendo's official YouTube channel posted a 14-minute-long anime titled, *Star Fox Zero – The Battle Begins*. The anime was produced in collaboration with Shigeru Miyamoto, WIT Studios, and Production IG, the same studio behind animated films such as *Ghost in the Shell*, *Blood: The Last Vampire*, *The End of Evangelion*, and movies based on *Pokemon: Black and White*.

16 SOUNDTRACK

The *Star Fox* Original Soundtrack was released on CD in 1994. There are three arranged tracks by Norimasa "Kisho" Yamanaka, in addition to Hajime Hirasawa's genre-shattering original compositions. The final three tracks include live recordings of gameplay.



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox
Confidential Information

Speedrunner fling84

World Records Held: Warpless (22m 42s), Level 2 – Warps (16m 50s), Level 2 – Warpless (21m 28s), Level 3 – Warps (23m 13s), Level 3 – Warpless (28m 57s)

fling84 develops web applications for the healthcare industry by day. By night, he sits in front of a 14-inch CRT television—quite similar to what many Super NES players likely played on back in 1994. But unlike us mere mortals, fling84's retro fascination has earned him various world records across *Star Fox*'s three courses (often referred to as "levels").

fling84 explains that *Star Fox* speedruns revolve largely around reducing lag caused by the graphics putting strain on the hardware: "I've actually done some sessions where I took a few hours and did nothing more than repeatedly fly through the same sections of levels in subtly different ways to see what (if anything) made a difference in terms of lag. In some cases, I found non-obvious things like flying through a certain stretch of Sector Z on the very left edge of the screen instead of the very right made a difference of about one to two seconds even though the same number and types of objects were visible throughout the entire stretch on both sides. In the same level I also found that in one section, holding Down to fly through a section at the very bottom edge of the screen actually made that section a little bit slower (though, again a difference of only one to two seconds)."

"This kind of testing has really shown me the sheer number of possible route improvements that are left to find in this game," says fling84. "Things that I tried thinking logically as a software developer myself about how the game engine probably works turned out not to be true in some cases. When working on further optimizing runs of this game, you really need to think outside the box."

For potential runners, casual players, and intrigued spectators, fling84 shares a variety of techniques that help ensure Andross is always defeated as quickly as possible.

Basic

Boosting

Boosting is very, very, very important! When you press Boost, you get a temporary speed bonus and your Arwing speeds up ahead a little bit until your boost meter is used up. Then you must wait for the boost meter to refill before you can boost again. You want to boost at every single opportunity. Over the course of an entire speedrun, all of these boosts make a large difference.

You should even boost as much as possible during boss fights, as the way the game implements some boss animations seems to be based on the speed that the game engine is currently running at. Boosting at least partially seems to speed this up, in effect making some boss animations run a little bit quicker.

For a lot of runners, including myself, boosting constantly throughout an entire run probably requires holding the controller in a sort of claw-grip where the index finger of your right hand is permanently holding down the X button (which is Boost in control type A). This leaves you able to use your thumb to hit the Y, B, and A buttons. This probably means that you will find it very difficult to use the R button, so you'll be barrel rolling with the L button instead. You want to make sure that you're comfortable moving your right hand into and out of this kind of grip quickly just for those few spots where you want to use the R button to perform a quick turn.

Quick Boss Kills

This should be fairly obvious, but of course in a *Star Fox* speedrun, a significant amount of your time savings comes from killing bosses more quickly. Boss fights are probably the one single area in the game where you have the most control over how long or short it takes versus the rest of the game where you have a relatively limited ability to affect the auto-scroll rate that the game moves at. Each boss has different strategies to quickly kill it, and while I cannot possibly cover them all here, I will discuss a few in detail to give you an idea of the types of strategies involved.

Lag Reduction

A lot of lag reduction in *Star Fox* is pretty situational, and much of it might even seem counter-intuitive at first glance until you really learn the levels (and even then, some of it will probably remain counter-intuitive!). Probably the single most important thing to understand about a *Star Fox* speedrun is regarding the auto-scroll component in the game. This is the part of the game that moves your Arwing forward automatically without your needing to hold forward or some other "accelerate" type of button on your controller during gameplay. The rate at which the auto-scroll moves at is influenced by the frame rate that the game is running at. Thus, if you are able to reduce lag, you keep the game engine running at a higher frame rate, which means you finish each level quicker! Simple, right?

Lag reduction places a very high emphasis on a runner's need to get as good as they can at improving their shot accuracy. Both because it reduces the number of projectiles you yourself are adding by shooting more times than necessary, and because it means that enemies are getting killed as quickly as possible (therefore, less lag overall).

Barrel Rolling

How could this not be here? This is the game that meme originated from after all! Barrel rolling is a basic technique that you want to make second nature. It allows you to deflect pretty much any incoming fire except for missiles and things (ships, objects, etc.) physically crashing into you.

It is widely believed in the community that barrel rolling while spam shooting slightly increases the rate that you can shoot. While I've not personally seen any concrete evidence or testing of this, it is still worth doing in many situations when you are spam shooting at an enemy. Often that same enemy (or other enemies nearby) are very likely shooting back at you. Barrel rolling continuously allows you to easily deflect the incoming fire and not lose any time for shooting.

SUPER NOSTALGIA

Before watching your favorite speedrunner on Twitch was a thing, *Nintendo Power* offered fans an inside look at *Star Fox*!

Advanced

Optimal Nova Bomb Usage

Nova Bombs are used during pretty much every boss fight to take them out quickly. Many bosses have limited vulnerable sections that you must shoot at to damage them, and often these vulnerable parts are shown only for limited periods of time. This is the case for bosses such as Attack Carrier, Rock Crusher, Galactic Rider, Great Commander, and more.

In these types of situations, you want to either find some visual cue or count for a certain number of seconds to allow you to perfectly time throwing a Nova Bomb in advance of the boss becoming vulnerable to damage so that it explodes at the first frame it becomes vulnerable. For me personally, I tend to use counts of two to three seconds much more often than visual cues, but everyone develops their own method that works best for them.

An example of this is during the Rock Crusher fight. Rock Crusher starts out by rotating one of two different flat sections with four nodes into position to shoot at you. Once it finishes rotating, there is a brief pause and then the nodes open up and begin shooting. It is at this time that they are vulnerable to attack. In a speedrun, you almost certainly want to use a Nova Bomb to quickly take them all out. But you don't want to wait for them to open before launching a Nova Bomb at them.

Instead, time your Nova Bombs. In this case, you can either launch a Nova Bomb before the four nodes open so that it collides with the boss and explodes just as the nodes open, or launch a Nova Bomb early and be ready to detonate it early (by pressing the button again after it has been launched) as soon as you see the nodes open up. The latter method is probably easiest to do consistently and is what I recommend in most cases, as it can be quite difficult to judge distances accurately.

Taking Out Large Packs of Enemies with Bombs (On-Screen and Off)

The exact situations where this is possible and actually saves you time are few and far between, but when it does come up it's both helpful and fun. The usual scenarios for this are when a formation of four to six enemy ships (or more!) comes flying in from off-screen and they hang around for a long time if you don't deal with them quickly. Sometimes they even come in waves, with a first pack of ships, followed a few seconds later by a second pack.

When you find yourself having to deal with larger packs of ships that you find difficult to take out quickly, definitely think about whether a Nova Bomb could be used to speed it up. If it's one of those cases where there are multiple waves, pay special attention to the timing. You can launch a Nova Bomb to take out the first pack of enemies, but delay launching it just a tad so that when it explodes it takes out the second wave of enemies that may have only just spawned and are still off-screen. This type of setup can offer a nice savings in terms of lag reduction. Be careful about overusing this though, as in most runs the majority of your Nova Bombs should probably be saved for boss fights.

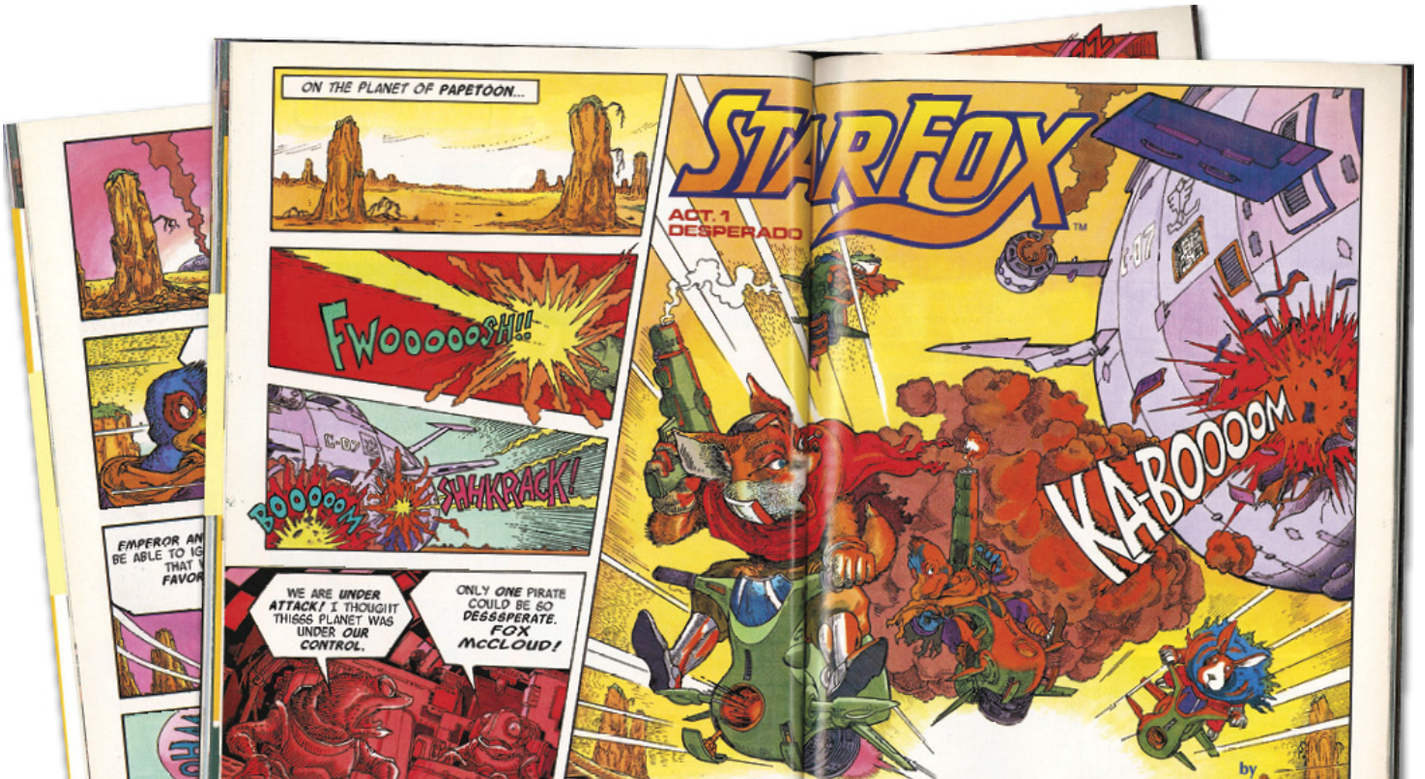
As an example of this in action, in Course 2 Venom Orbit, just after the blue middle ring in the level, one of your teammates flies in calling for help, with an enemy following him. When you save him, he hangs out at the bottom middle of your screen for a short while. At this same time a formation of four gray enemy ships comes in. They can be hard to take out quickly because they're spaced out kind of far apart. Additionally, they are soon followed by a second wave of ships that comes in from off-screen. In this situation, you can actually throw a Nova Bomb at your teammate (don't worry, he'll be fine), and the bomb explodes off of his ship and takes out the four visible enemy ships. Plus, if you hesitated for just the right amount of time, the explosion also takes out the second wave of incoming ships and you'll never even know they were coming!

Braking Can Help You Aim More Effectively

During some boss fights, you find yourself in a situation with a boss that is flying around the screen and you need to follow it with your aim, spam shooting to kill it as quickly as possible. It can often be difficult to anticipate the direction the boss moves if it's not a pre-set pattern and you'll end up with a lot of wasted shots.

In these situations, using brake can help speed things up for you by making it easier to adjust your aim to follow the boss's movement.

As an example, for the Dancing Insector fight, in one of the later phases when its legs first turn red and it rises up and starts spinning around, you need to shoot at its legs to take them out quickly. The boss spins around the screen moving side to side but also moving in closer to you periodically. When it moves in, it is a perfect time to brake as usually when it comes in close like this it also arcs around in a semi-circle and if you don't anticipate this movement you can easily lose your aim. By using the brake, you not only back up your Arwing a little bit, you also make it easier to adjust your aim because less time turning is needed to follow along with the boss's movement due to the fact that you're temporarily a little bit farther backward. This is a great strategy to consistently save time (originally devised by LowKeeee) for a fight that already seems overly difficult.



Expert

Quick Great Commander Kill

For best results, you want to ensure that you keep the shield upgrade found during the level for this fight. It is possible to pull this quick kill off without the shield upgrade, but it is extremely risky (you are likely to incur wing damage, and possibly even die). Additionally, you will want to come into this fight with all five Nova Bombs just in case you aren't able to successfully pull off the quick kill.

Once the Great Commander finishes its lengthy intro sequence and is fully assembled, it starts flying forward and heads off the screen behind you. One of its nodes on the right side flips open, so be ready to launch a Nova Bomb directly at the front section of the Great Commander. This should always take out the node. Then the game automatically spins you around to face the boss again, who is now quite a distance away from you.

Barrel roll as needed to deflect its incoming shots so you don't lose the shield upgrade too soon. After a second or two, you should see multiple nodes open up while it's still far away. The moment you see this happen, launch another Nova Bomb, making sure to aim it precisely at the boss as you want it to explode as close as possible to make sure it deals the highest amount of damage. Don't hesitate too long before launching a bomb, otherwise you risk the nodes closing before the bomb explodes. If done properly, this should ideally take out two to three additional nodes.

Now the boss should be getting closer. Look quickly at both sides of nodes and watch for the first set of nodes that open. This usually happens when it's quite close. The instant you see the first set of nodes open, quickly launch a Nova Bomb at that side, and then immediately turn and align yourself directly in front of the line of nodes on the opposite side of the boss. What you want to do here is crash your Arwing into the boss to destroy the nodes on this side. The game tries to bounce you back out of the boss when you crash into it, so you should hold Down to make sure you stay inside as much as possible.

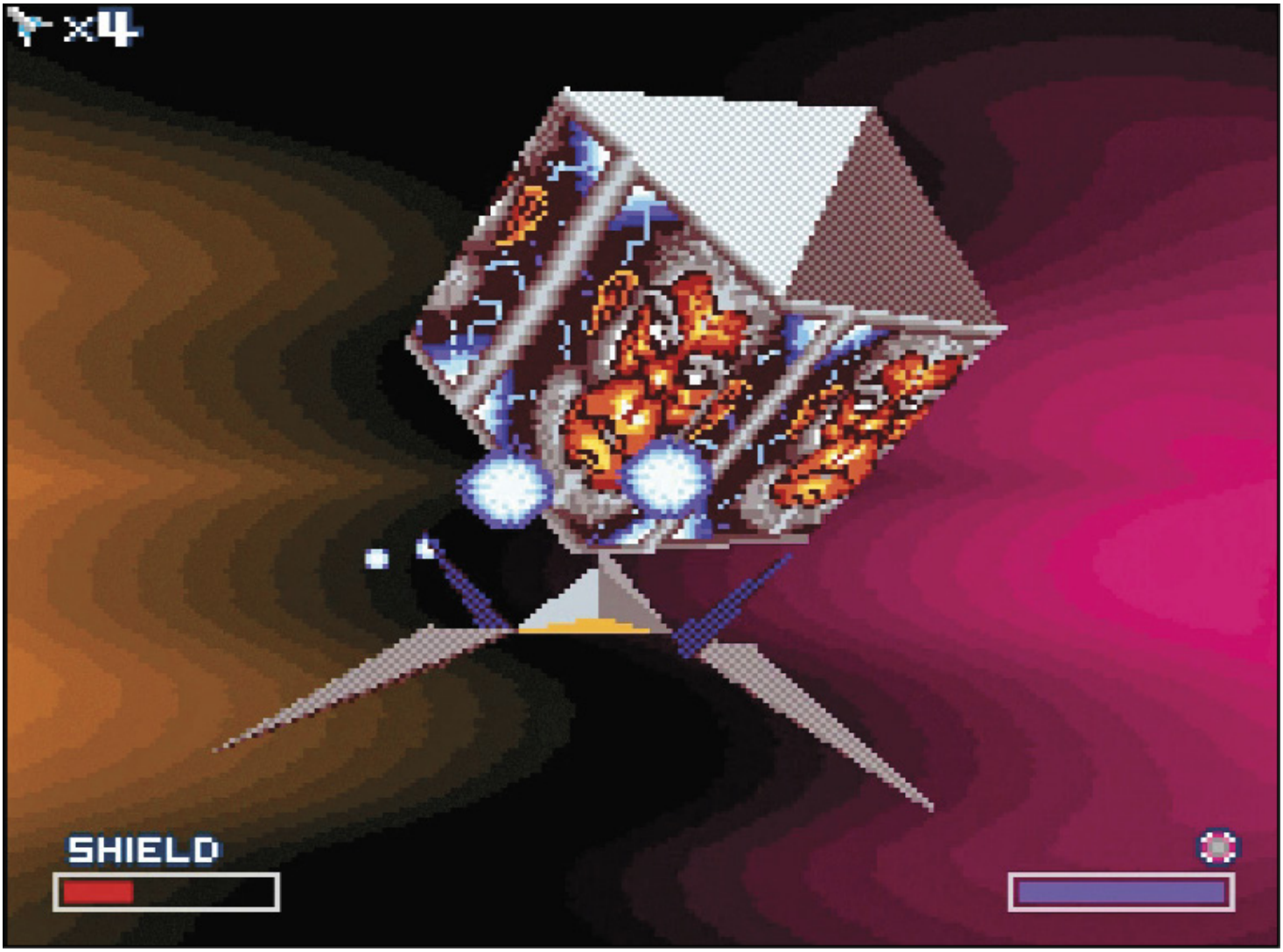
The hitboxes for these nodes do seem overly finicky and it's possible there's some RNG element to it as well, so sometimes you may find this strategy works perfectly, and others it might fail for unknown reasons. If it worked, the boss should now be dead. If not, you should still have two Nova Bombs left over to kill the remaining nodes which shouldn't be a problem.

Phantron Second Phase Skip

This is a very difficult trick to pull off consistently. The fight starts off with Phantron sitting still and you can shoot at it. When you damage it, it moves off to a new position and you need to follow it with your aim. Keep doing this until you get it to 50% health.

Once you're at this point you want to quickly try to guess the path it will take to move to its next position when you damage it the next time. Fire a Nova Bomb along this path but aim a little bit closer to the boss, keeping a little bit of distance between where you are aiming the bomb and where the boss is now. You want to hesitate for maybe a second (but no more!) before you switch over to resume shooting at Phantron, else he may start to move too soon. When you shoot him and if you timed everything correctly, Phantron moves into the bomb's explosion and that takes care of its remaining health, ending the fight.

One-Cycle Cube Andross Tips



In Courses 2 and 3, the Andross fight is a little bit harder and can take longer. This is because in addition to increased damage from Andross, his health pool is also increased. For taking out the eyes during the face phase this is usually not a problem, but for the cube phase this can make the difference between a one-cycle kill or a slower two-cycle kill. The exact strategy needed for each fight differs a bit between Course 2 and 3.

One commonality is the path that the cube takes when it first appears before it finally becomes vulnerable to your attacks. It moves by arcing toward the bottom right, then comes up to the top right/middle before settling back a bit more toward the middle area of the screen. In both Course 2 and 3, you want to launch a Nova Bomb at it such that it explodes the very instant the cube becomes vulnerable to damage, and knowing its movement pattern can help you aim this Nova Bomb better (you definitely want the bomb to explode against the cube for maximum damage).

In Course 2, all that's left is to spam shots on Cube Andross as fast as possible. Only the initial bomb is needed if you timed it well. When the bomb explodes, you should also see the top/bottom color of the cube change to orange almost immediately. This indicates that Andross is low on health and is a good sign.

However, for Course 3, two Nova Bombs are needed. After the first bomb is launched as explained above and you've begun spam shooting, you want to watch the color of the top/bottom parts of the cube closely. A moment after they turn orange, launch a second Nova Bomb directly at the cube. Let it collide with the cube itself so that you can very quickly switch back to spam shooting to get in as much damage as possible.

Star Fox 2

2017, Super NES Classic

Star Fox 2 was developed and finished but never released for the Super NES. It introduced a number of characters and features that became mainstays in the series, including the Star Wolf team and transforming vehicles.

More than two decades after it was canceled, the full game was released for the first time ever via the Super NES Classic console in 2017. You can read more about *Star Fox 2* in the next chapter!

Star Fox 64

1997, Nintendo 64

Along with a drastic visual upgrade, *Star Fox 64* formally introduced players to the villainous Star Wolf team, as well as the Landmaster, an agile tank used for two ground missions. Fox's wingmen were each given unique support abilities, such as scanning bosses or locating alternate routes.

Certain sequences, most notably boss battles and multiplayer, took place in "All-Range Mode," which allowed for total 360-degree flight, another concept lifted from *Star Fox 2*.

Star Fox 64 included the Rumble Pak and was the first game to support the accessory, which soon became a standard feature of every home console controller.

Star Fox 64 was known as *Lylat Wars* in Europe.

Star Fox Adventures

2002, Nintendo GameCube

Star Fox Adventures saw Fox McCloud leave the *Arwing* behind for a grand epic adventure in the same vein as *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. Developed by Rare, *Star Fox Adventures* was a substantial departure from the rest of the series and was initially conceived as an original game called *Dinosaur Planet*.

Star Fox Adventures is also particularly notable for the first appearance of Krystal, Fox's romantic interest and eventual mainstay of the franchise.

Star Fox: Assault

2005, Nintendo GameCube

Developed by Namco, *Star Fox: Assault* follows the events of *Star Fox Adventures*, with Krystal replacing Peppy Hare as the fourth member of *Star Fox*. Gameplay built upon *Star Fox 64*'s mechanics, while adding on-foot single-player sequences and expanded multiplayer.

Star Fox Command

2006, Nintendo DS

Star Fox Command was Nintendo's first *Star Fox* collaboration with Q-Games (PixelJunk series), which was founded by ex-Argonaut Software programmer Dylan Cuthbert (*X*, *Star Fox*, *Star Fox 2*).

Building off of *Star Fox 2*'s open-ended mission structure and turn-based strategic elements, *Star Fox Command* tasked players with completing various brief objectives to progress the branching story. There are a total of 14 playable characters, each with their own unique ship and abilities.

The plot takes place after *Star Fox: Assault*, and there are nine possible endings depending on the player's decisions and performance throughout the game.

Star Fox Command was the first *Star Fox* title to feature online multiplayer.

Star Fox 64 3D

2011, Nintendo 3DS

Co-developed by Nintendo EAD and Q-Games, *Star Fox 64 3D* was a port of the Nintendo 64 classic for the Nintendo 3DS. The most notable difference between the two versions was a "3DS Mode," which re-balanced certain aspects of the game for use with the 3D visuals and gyro controls.

Star Fox Zero

2016, Wii U

Ten years after the last original *Star Fox* game, Nintendo teamed up with PlatinumGames (*Bayonetta*, *Nier: Automata*) for a new *Star Fox* title. Although largely similar to previous games, most notably *Star Fox 64*, *Star Fox Zero* was officially separated from the rest of the series as neither a sequel, prequel, or remake.

The game featured vibrant visuals and several new vehicles, including the Walker, Gravmaster, and Gyrowing. Both the *Star Fox* and Star Wolf characters returned, along with many familiar locations.

The Retro Arwing and Black Arwing could be unlocked via the Fox and Falco amiibo, respectively.

Star Fox Guard

2016, Wii U

Star Fox Guard was a tower-defense game developed by the same team as *Star Fox Zero* and bundled with it upon its release in 2016. Players protect bases owned by Slippy Toad's uncle, Grippy, from an army of robots by using a network of security cameras and weapons.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox

Star Fox Credits

Assistant Director

Yoichi Yamada

Programmed By

Dylan Cuthbert

Giles Goddard

Krister Wombell

3D System

Pete Warnes

Carl Graham

Graphic Designer

Takaya Imamura

Shape Designer

Tsuyoshi Watanabe

Sound Effects

Koji Kondo

Music Composer

Hajime Hirasawa

Assisted By

Argonaut Software

Super FX Staff

Jez San

Ben Cheese

Richard Clucas

Satoshi Nishiumi

Hironobu Kakui

Software Support

Yasunari Nishida

Yasuhiro Kawaguchi

Shigeki Yamashiro

English Support

Dan Owsen

Tony Harman

Jon Dean

Ian Crowther

Japanese Support

Keizo Kato

Takao Shimizu

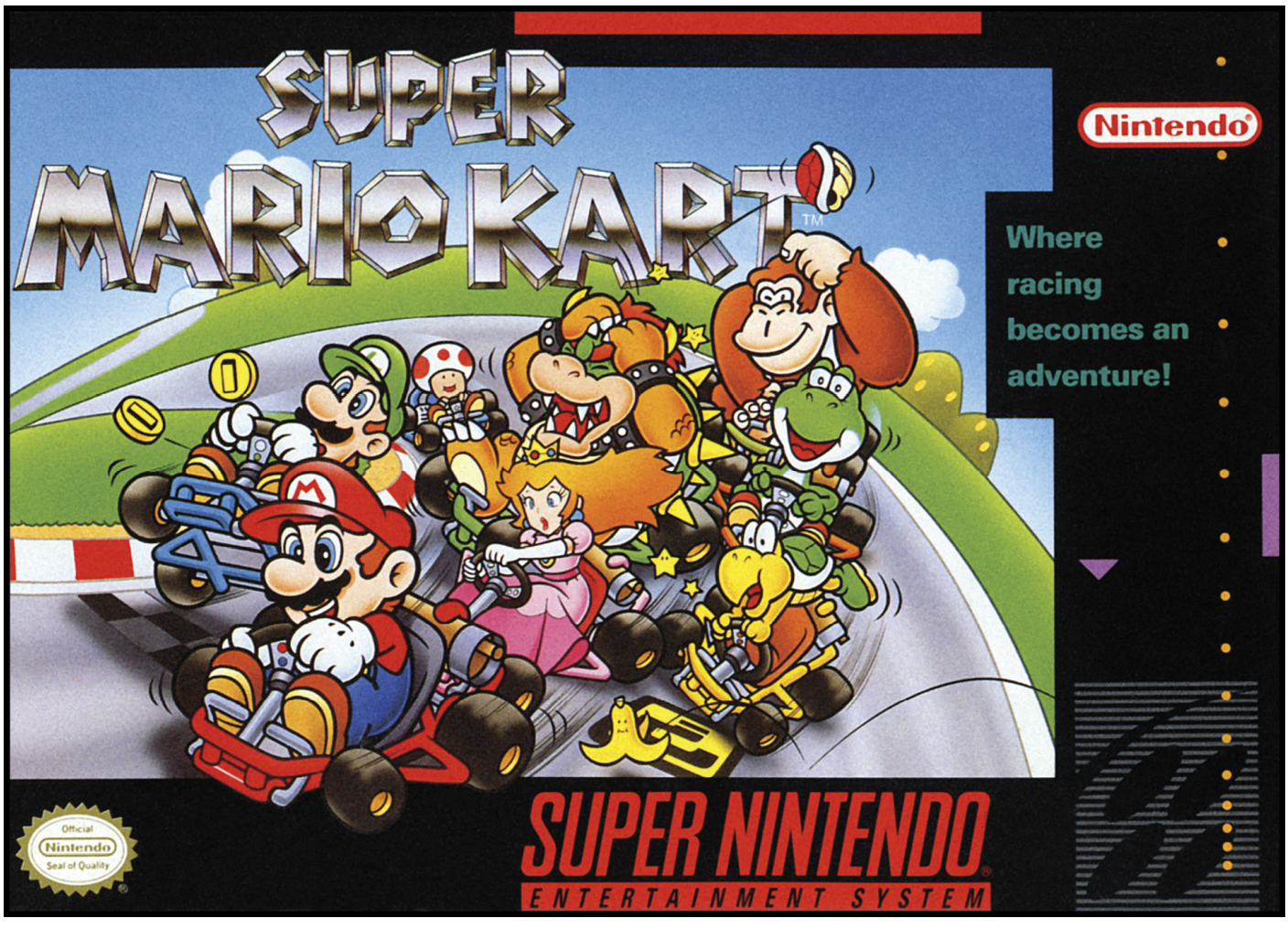
Masato Kimura

Hajime Yajima

Kenji Yamamoto

Super Mario Kart

Overview



DEVELOPER

Nintendo EAD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: August 27, 1992

NA: September 1, 1992

EU: January 21, 1993

Hi everybody! Thanks for dropping by the Super Mario Kart race track. My name is Lakitu, I run this track. If you need my help, I'll be around.

We race one seater, metal pipe frame go carts here. There are engine sizes to choose from: 50cc or 100cc. All of the go carts are more or less the same, it's the individual drivers that make the difference when it comes to winning. Each driver has their strengths and weaknesses. Try using the different drivers until you find the best one for you.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario Kart

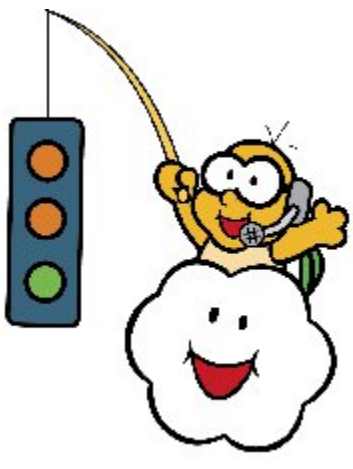
Development

Modern Nintendo fans have a wide array of *Mario* spin-off games at their fingertips, so it's easy to assume that was the intent from the start for the eponymous racing series. However, the iconic franchise's genesis—which arguably kicked off the plumber's saga as a spin-off superstar—was a bit of a winding road. Originally, the game had nothing to do with Mario, or karts.

You'd be hard-pressed to find much criticism of the original *F-Zero*. If anything, players wanted *more*. Specifically, they wanted to play with friends. Nintendo was interested in exploring that feature, yet not necessarily for *F-Zero* itself. "I should point out that we didn't set out to create a two-player version of *F-Zero*," producer Shigeru Miyamoto clarified during a 2008 Iwata Asks segment discussing the history of the *Mario Kart* series. "We set out to make a game where we could display the game screen for two players at the same time."

The concern with a multiplayer *F-Zero* was that the game's signature high speeds would have to be sacrificed, and upon experimenting with the multiplayer prototype this proved to be true. According to the developers, *F-Zero* displays the layer for each course over an area equal to 100 game screens, which largely accounts for its immense speed and feeling of scale. Trying to layer in a split-screen feature on top of that proved too much for the hardware, ultimately requiring the game area to be no more than four screens wide by four screens high (84 fewer screens than *F-Zero*). With the limitation of a substantially smaller course, the dev team found it impossible to recreate the signature sense of speed achieved in their first racing game.

So what's slightly slower than 26th century hovercrafts powered by experimental alien technology? The *Super Mario Kart* team eventually decided on go-karts, as they were a much better fit for the smaller courses. In the official *Super Mario Kart* strategy guide, Mr. Miyamoto recounted wanting to make "a fun, lighthearted game where you zip around unrealistically in cars. It wouldn't be the life-or-death, dangerous world of F1 racing, but more the atmosphere of screeching wheels as you zip around an amusement park. From those ideas, the concept eventually evolved naturally from cars to karts." It just so happened that go-karts were becoming quite popular in the early '90s thanks to a number of high-profile Formula One racers who had begun their climb to motorsport stardom through karting. A very lucky coincidence for Nintendo.



"In the very first prototype, there was a guy in overalls sitting in the kart," Mr. Miyamoto explained via Iwata Asks. "At first, no racing was involved. It was just two karts moving around freely. Then we noticed that it looked neat if you stopped one car and looked at the other car flying by. We decided to see what it would look like with Mario in one of the karts, and everyone thought that looked even better. Who knows, maybe the designer who drew the overalls on the earlier guy intended that it be changed to Mario all along!"

But Mario wouldn't be alone for this ride. Luigi, Princess Toadstool, Toad, and rising star Yoshi were all obvious picks for inclusion. Rounding out the cast were Donkey Kong Jr. and villains Bowser and Koopa Troopa. With the goal being fun above all else, DK, Bowser, and the Bros. would set aside their differences and settle things as equals on the track, viewed by Nintendo more as "friendly rivals" in this setting. The team also felt that the villains in the Mario universe were somewhat hard to hate, so players wouldn't mind taking control of them.

The Bros.

Mario

Strength	Well-Balanced
AI Item	Star

Mario and Luigi have balanced top speed, handling, weight, and acceleration. They're good for beginner players and beasts as AI opponents, thanks to their unlimited Star items.

Luigi

Strength	Well-Balanced
AI Item	Star

Pre-death-stare Luigi was from a simpler, happier time.

The DRagon and the Lady

Princess Toadstool

Strength	Acceleration
AI Item	Poison Mushroom

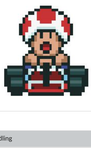
Referred to simply as "Princess" in the instruction booklet, you have to admire anyone who pilots an open-wheel go-kart in such royal attire. Also, how does her crown stay in place at speeds upwards of seven miles per hour?

Yoshi

Strength	Acceleration
AI Item	Egg

Everyone loves Yoshi! When controlled by the AI, Yoshi has an unlimited arsenal of Eggs to throw on the track, but...where are they all coming from?

The Small Guys



Toad

Strength	Handling
AI Item	Poison Mushroom

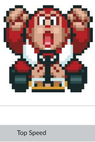
Toad can't outrun or outgun the competition, but he is unique in every other way...except for his exact statistical parity with Koopa Troopa.

Koopa Troopa

Strength	Handling
AI Item	Green Shell

After years of laborious servitude and enduring seemingly insurmountable hardship, Koopa Troopa finally rose up from his meek lineage as Bowser's punching bag and a literal stepping stone for the Mario Bros. With the hopes and dreams of the entire Koopa species on his shoulders, he races to prove once and for all that the Koopa Troopas are here to stay (Koopa Troopa was later replaced by Wario in *Mario Kart 64*).

The Showdown



Donkey Kong Jr.

Strength	Top Speed
AI Item	Banana Peel

If you've ever hit a Banana Peel that wasn't your own in a single-player race, you have Donkey Kong Jr. to thank for it.

Bowser

Strength	Top Speed
AI Item	Fireball

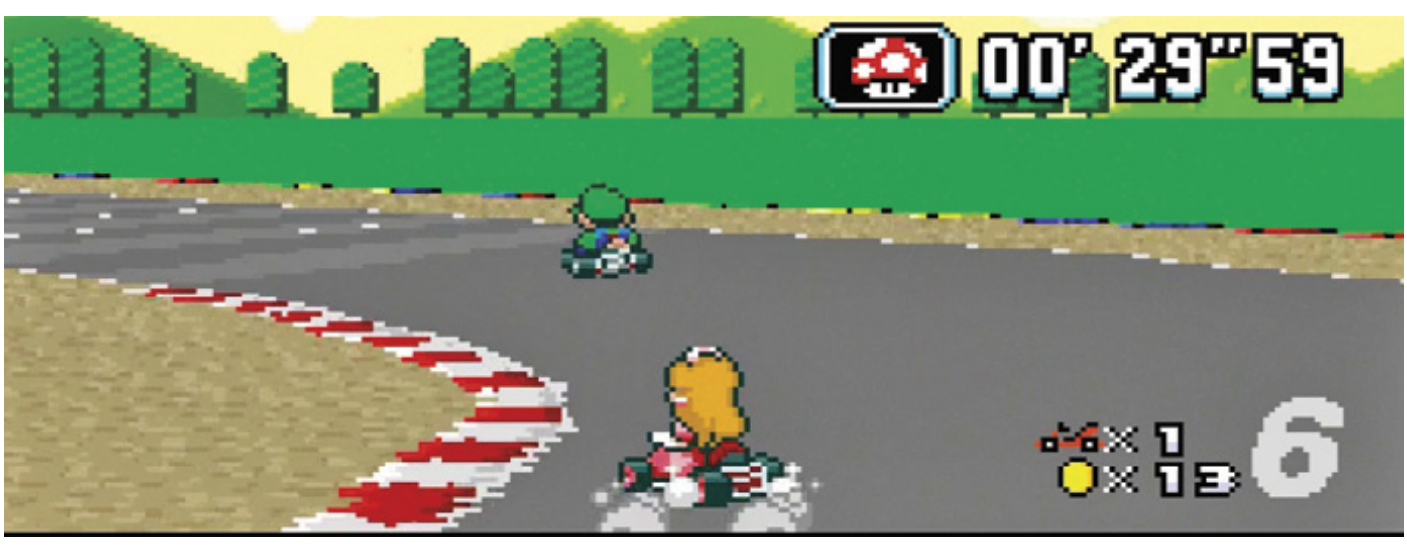
Bowser and Donkey Kong Jr. are heavier than other racers, allowing them to throw their weight around when racing becomes rubbing. They also have the highest top speed, making them the only choice for *Super Mario Kart* experts looking to break records.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario Kart

Items

There were two more key aspects of *Super Mario Kart* that would come to define it. The first of these was the control scheme. Driving a go-kart should prioritize fun and accessibility over technical skill, so the team spent a lot of time tweaking it to be just right. A drift mechanic was added that allowed players to slip and slide around the tracks for easier and faster cornering. A jump was added because what would a Jumpman game be without it? The idea was to create a racing game unlike any other, which leads to the second key aspect of *Super Mario Kart*, and the one the team believes is the most integral ingredient to any entry in the series: items.



Super Mario Kart can be largely credited for the popularity of weaponized vehicular combat games. The developers see items as an inseparable aspect of *Super Mario Kart* as they present opportunities to overcome skill differences between friends and family. Likewise, they are looked at as "communication tools" where players can interact with each other no matter where they are on the track. That communication just happens to take the form of shrinking you with a Lightning Bolt and then running you over.

Coins

Coins aren't always the most thoroughly understood mechanic in the *Mario Kart* series, likely due to their ever-changing functionality, yet they add a notable amount of depth in an otherwise intentionally simple game. In *Super Mario Kart*, Coins can be found scattered around the track or by using the Coin item, which instantly grants the player a pair of Coins. Obtaining a Coin increases the player's speed slightly, with the maximum effect being achieved at 10 Coins. Racers are given a set amount of Coins at the start of each race, with lower positions being given more in order to gain an initial speed advantage over the front of the pack. That they're used as a key balancing solution by the developers shows just how important they can be to anyone looking to get the edge on their opponents.

There is no limit to the number of Coins that can be carried at one time. This provides a buffer to prevent being deprived of the speed bonus, since there are a multitude of ways to lose held Coins. First, and most importantly, bumping into another racer knocks loose a Coin. If you have no Coins, you'll spin out. Taking hits from items also causes both a spinout and the loss of four Coins. And last, if Lakitu has to tow you out of a pit, the cloud-riding ferryman levies two Coins for safe passage. If you can't pay Lakitu, you'll be forced to roam Koopa Beach for one hundred years... Just kidding! Nothing happens.

AI Items

The following items are only used by AI racers, who have access to an unlimited stash. However, AI racers cannot use items from Item Pads as the player can. AI opponents automatically jump over enemy items as if they had a Feather, but it's still possible for them to get hit under certain circumstances.

Poison Mushrooms made their first appearance in the Japanese version of *Super Mario Bros. 2* (aka *The Lost Levels*), but they had a skull icon and darker color scheme, whereas the Poison Mushrooms in *Super Mario Kart* share an appearance similar to the Super Mushroom found in later *Mario Kart* games. Unlike most other items such as the Fireball and the Egg, Poison Mushrooms do not spin out racers, instead shrinking them and making them drive more slowly. However, eating a Poison Mushroom while already small, even if it was caused by a Lightning Bolt, returns the racer to normal.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario Kart

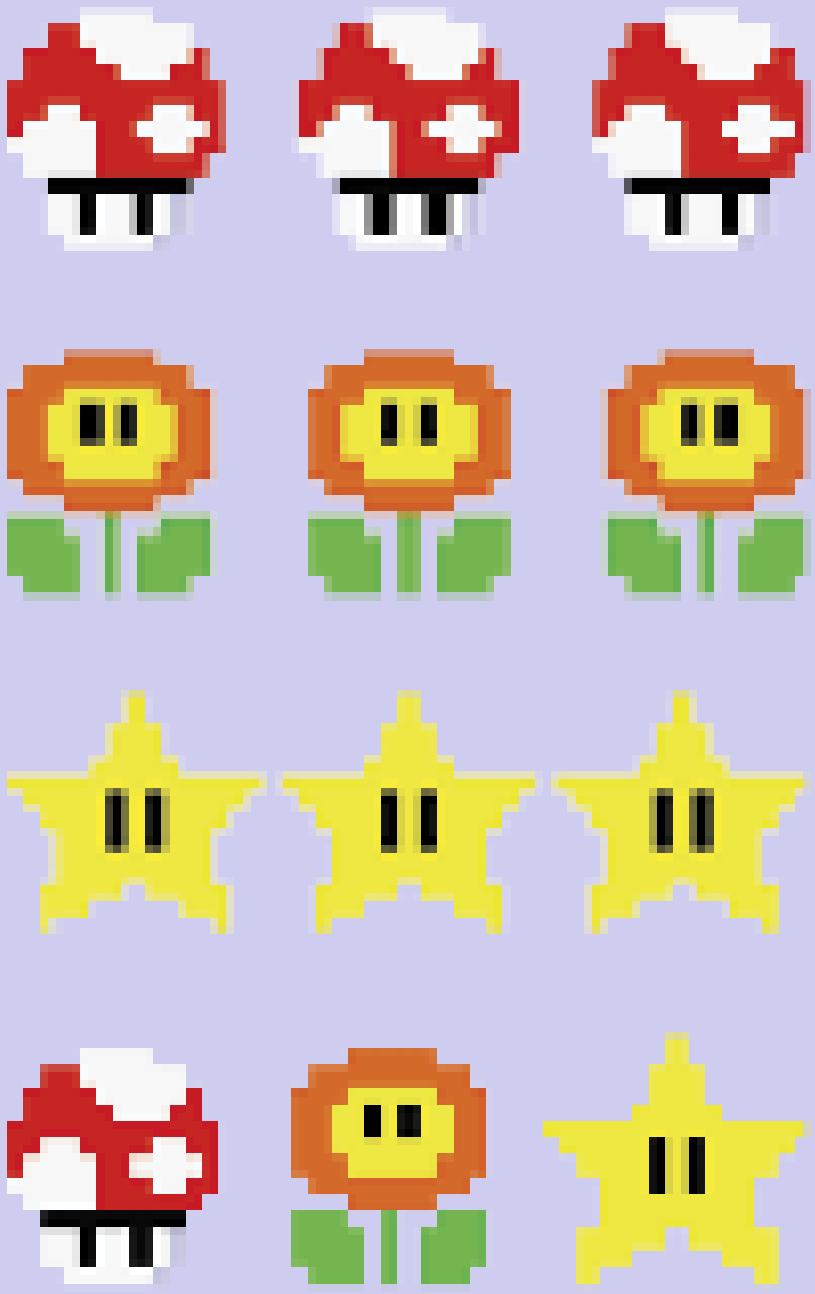
Tracks Overview

Super Mario Kart features a respectable 20 tracks spread across four cups. Like with other Nintendo EAD games at the time, it re-uses assets for tracks belonging to the same set, such as Mario Circuit 1 and Mario Circuit 2, to provide the most content possible within the hardware's memory limits.

The developers wanted the game to feel like racing in an amusement park more so than just going around a go-kart track. While the colorful and imaginative *Mario Bros.* world gave them a more spirited and cartoony vibe than other, more serious racing games at the time, the reliance on Mode 7 prevented varying elevations in the courses. In this way, *Super Mario Kart*, more than any other entry in the series, almost has a pop-up book-esque aesthetic, further adding to its exceptional charm.

THE CUP RACES

Super Mario Kart features five courses per cup, whereas all future titles would only feature four per cup.

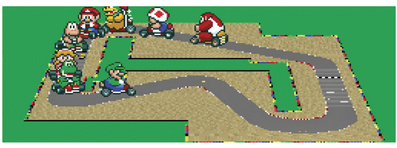


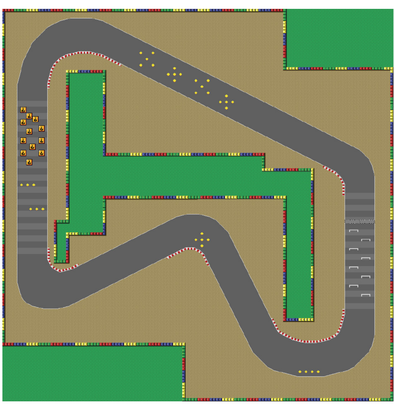
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario Kart

Mario Circuit

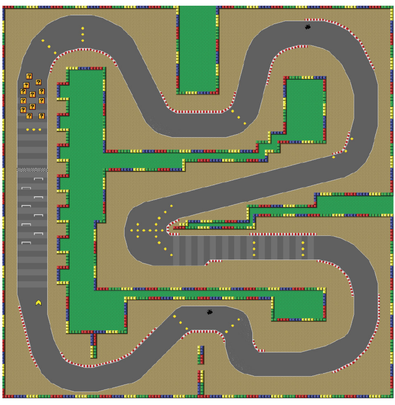
While Mario Circuit 1 serves as the introductory course for the game, Mario Circuits 2-4 conversely act as the grand finale for the first three cups. This batch of courses most closely resembles an actual go-kart track, albeit with a few Mario-centric decorations such as pipes and flat green hills in the background.



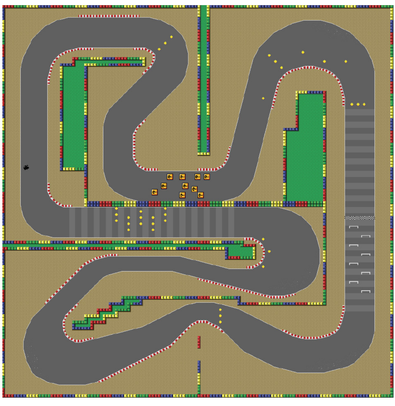


Mario Circuit 1

Mario Circuit 2



Mario Circuit 3



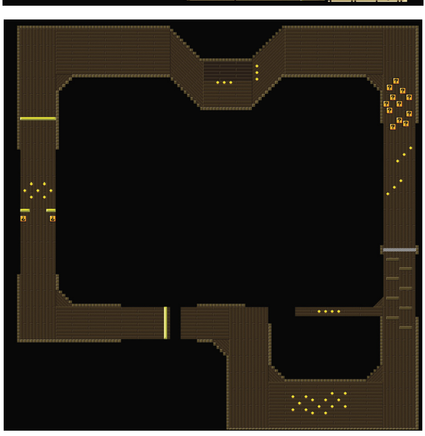
Mario Circuit 4

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

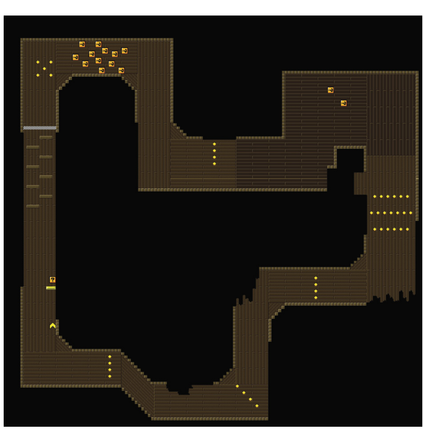
Super Mario Kart

Ghost Valley

Inspired by the Ghost Houses of *Super Mario World*, the Ghost Valley set is unsettling not just because of the appropriately eerie music, but also due to the black void that encompasses the track. Ghost Valley 1 is also home to *Super Mario Kart*'s most enticing—and therefore treacherous—shortcut.

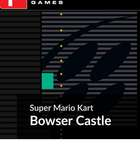


Ghost Valley 1



Ghost Valley 2

Ghost Valley 3



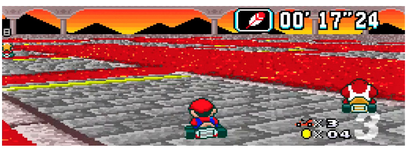
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

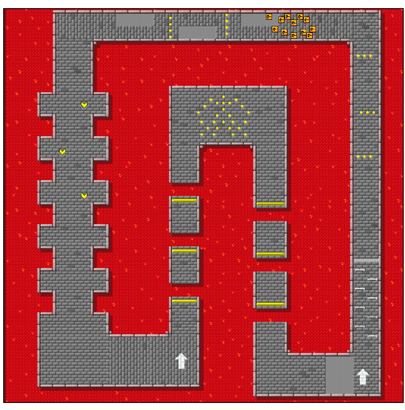
Super Mario Kart

Bowser Castle

What would a Bowser-themed stage be without lava pits? Each of the Bowser Castle tracks has the distinction of having no banked turns, instead opting for relentless, 90-degrees angles. Combined with lots of jumps and Thwomps, Bowser Castle (all three of them) makes for some of the game's most challenging and intense showdowns.

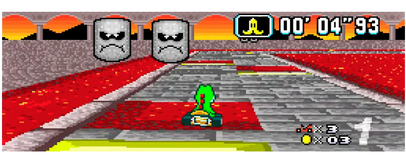
Bowser Castle 1

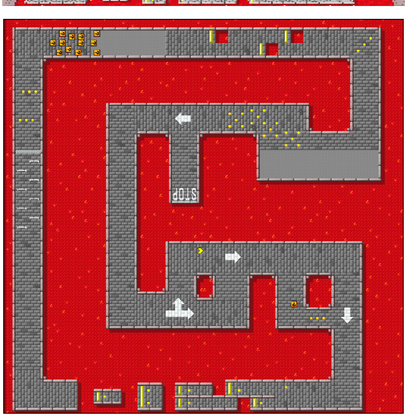




Bowser Castle 1

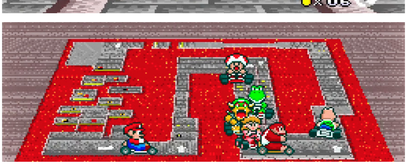
Bowser Castle 2

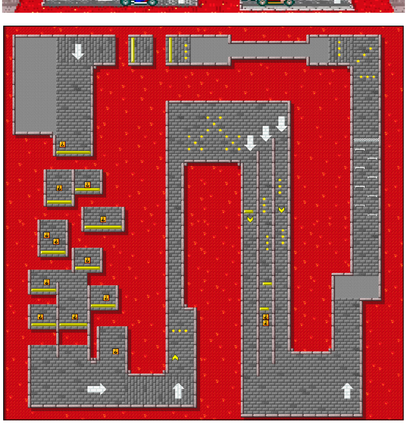




Bowser Castle 2

Bowser Castle 3





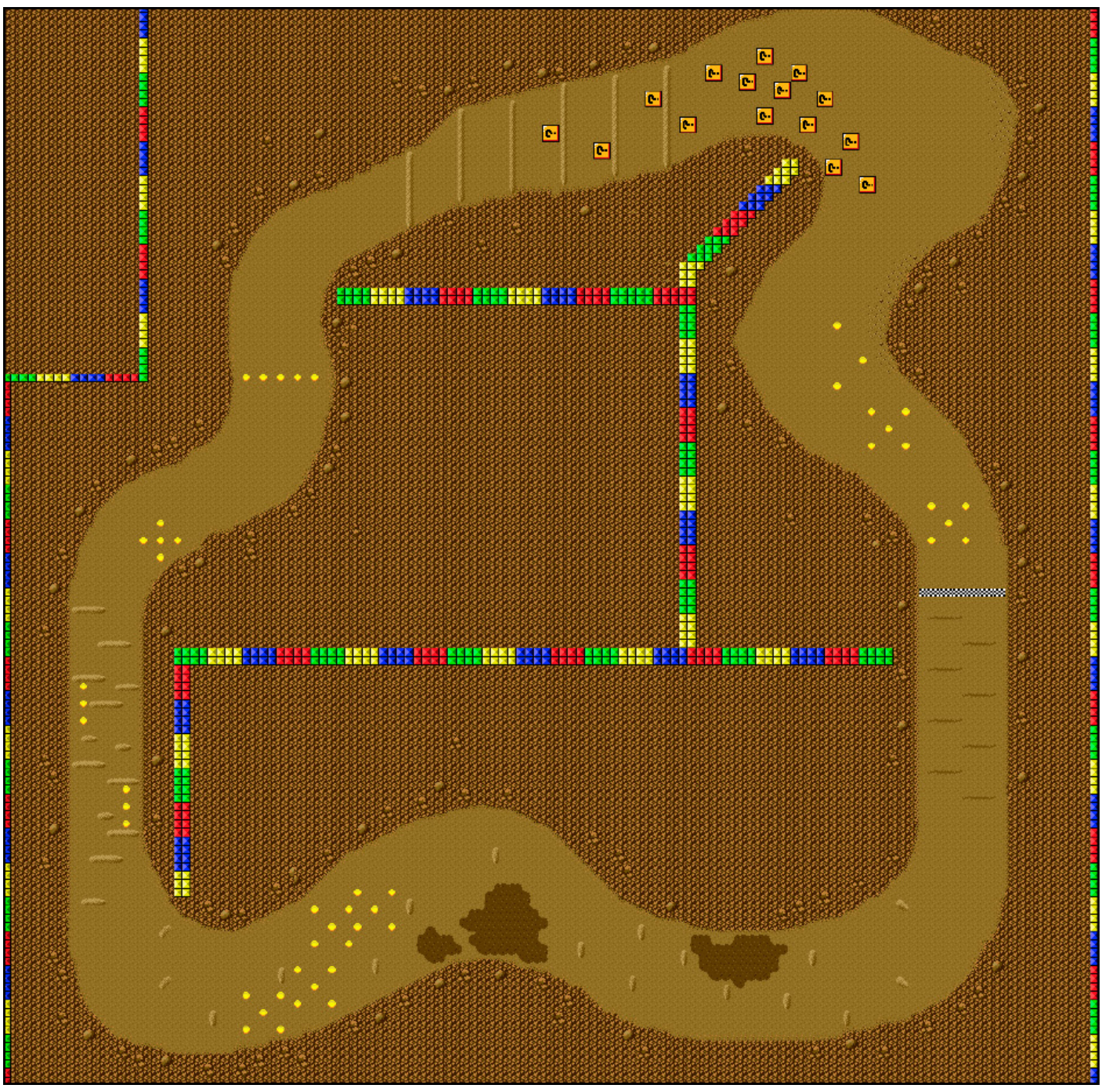
Bowser Castle 3

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

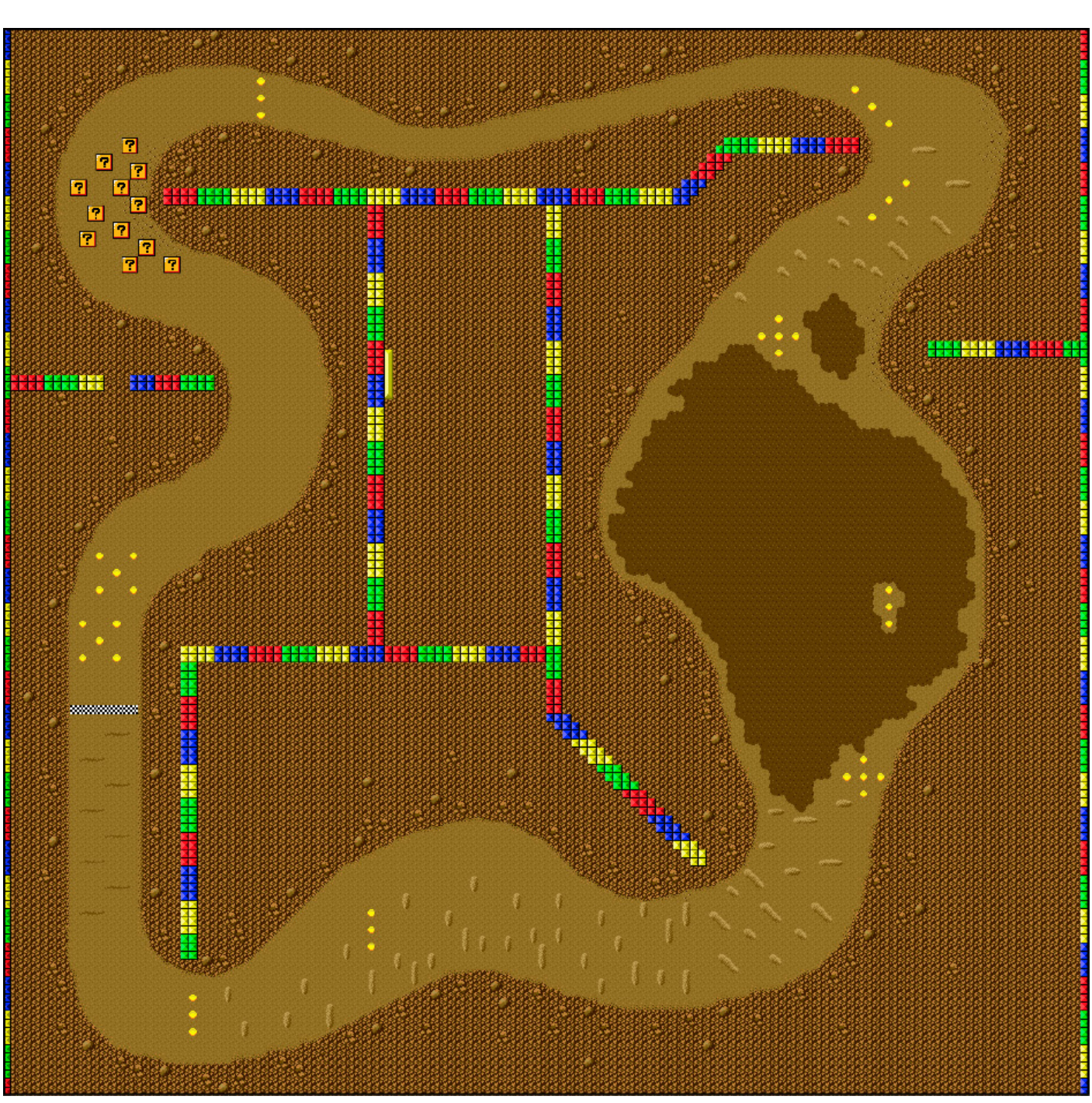
Super Mario Kart

Choco Island

Choco Island is essentially a browner, tastier version of Mario Circuit. With roads paved with chocolate and lined with Piranha Plants, Willy Wonka would be proud!



Choco Island 1



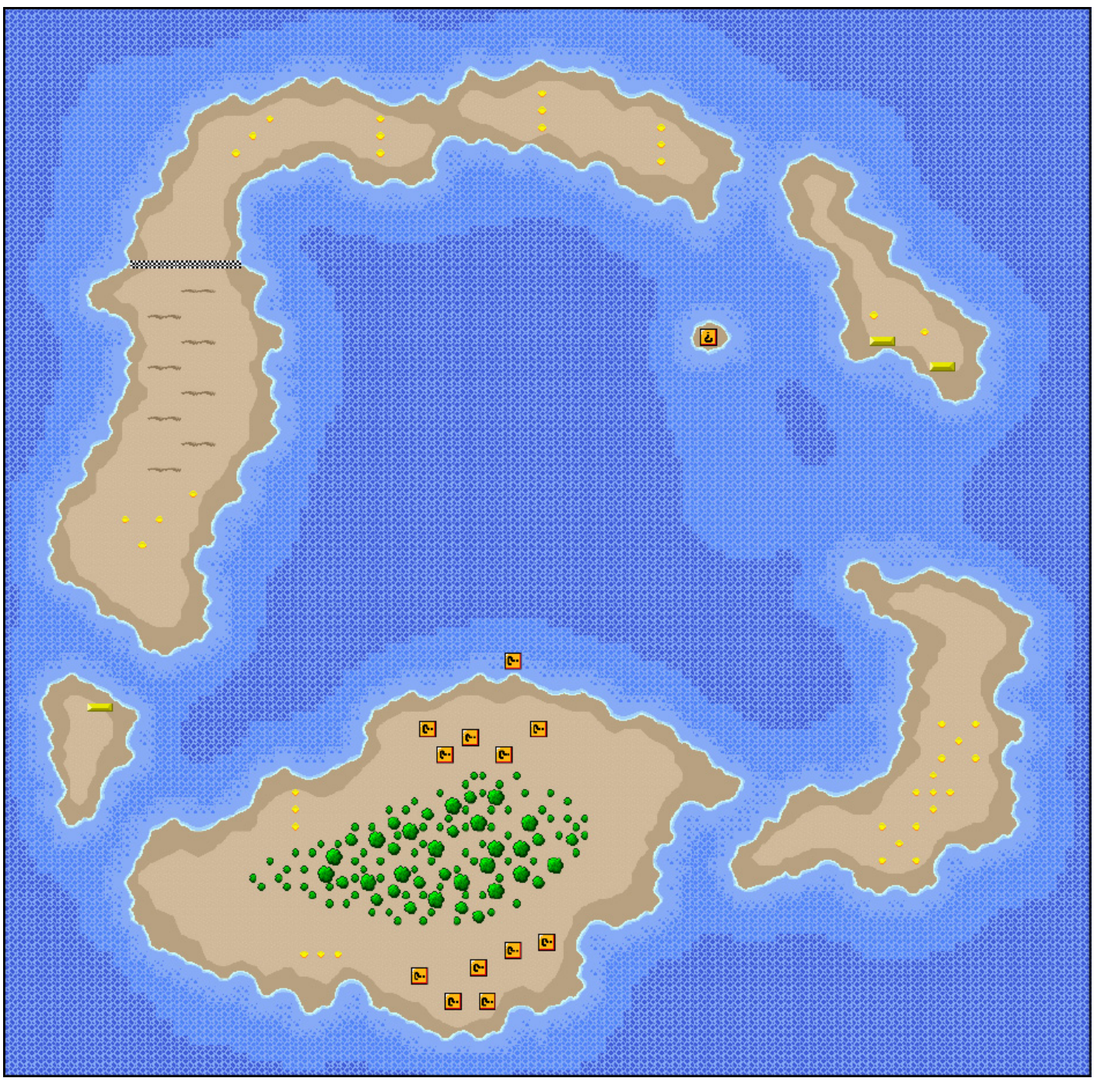
Choco Island 2

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario Kart

Koopa Beach

Koopa Beach is a beautiful open environment and a nice respite from the rest of the game, assuming you don't hit a sunbathing Cheep Cheep. Gone are the oppressive stacked tire walls and rails of other tracks. Due to its less restrictive design, Koopa Beach visually invites players to test their shortcut skills by driving off the path and cutting corners, but pushing it too far will lead to the deeper, darker water where racers will need to be fished out by Lakitu.



Koopa Beach 1

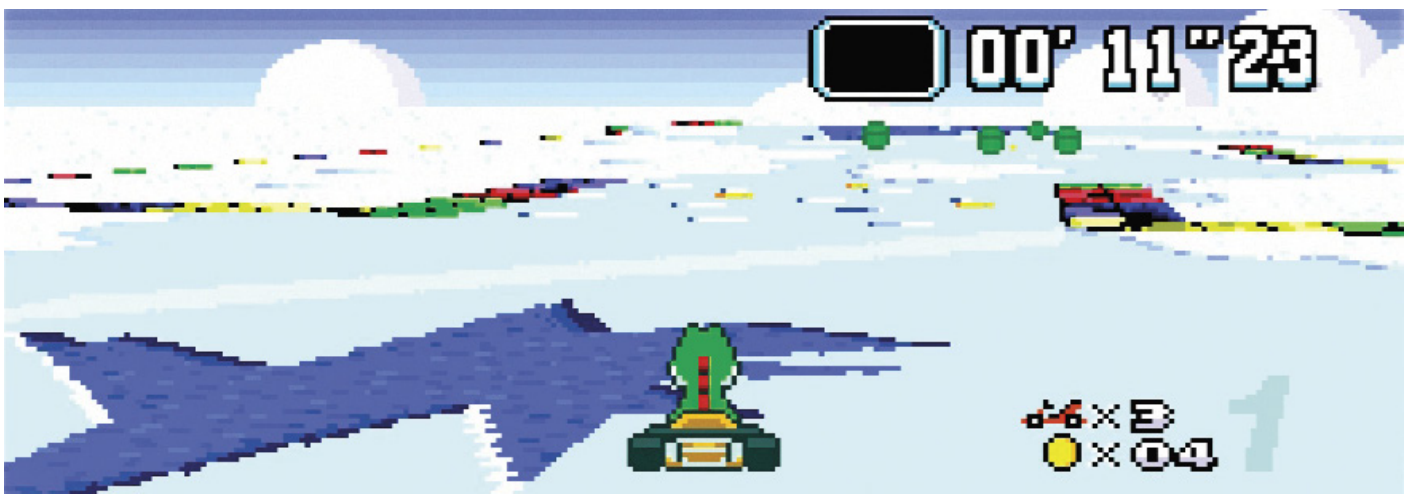
Koopa Beach 2

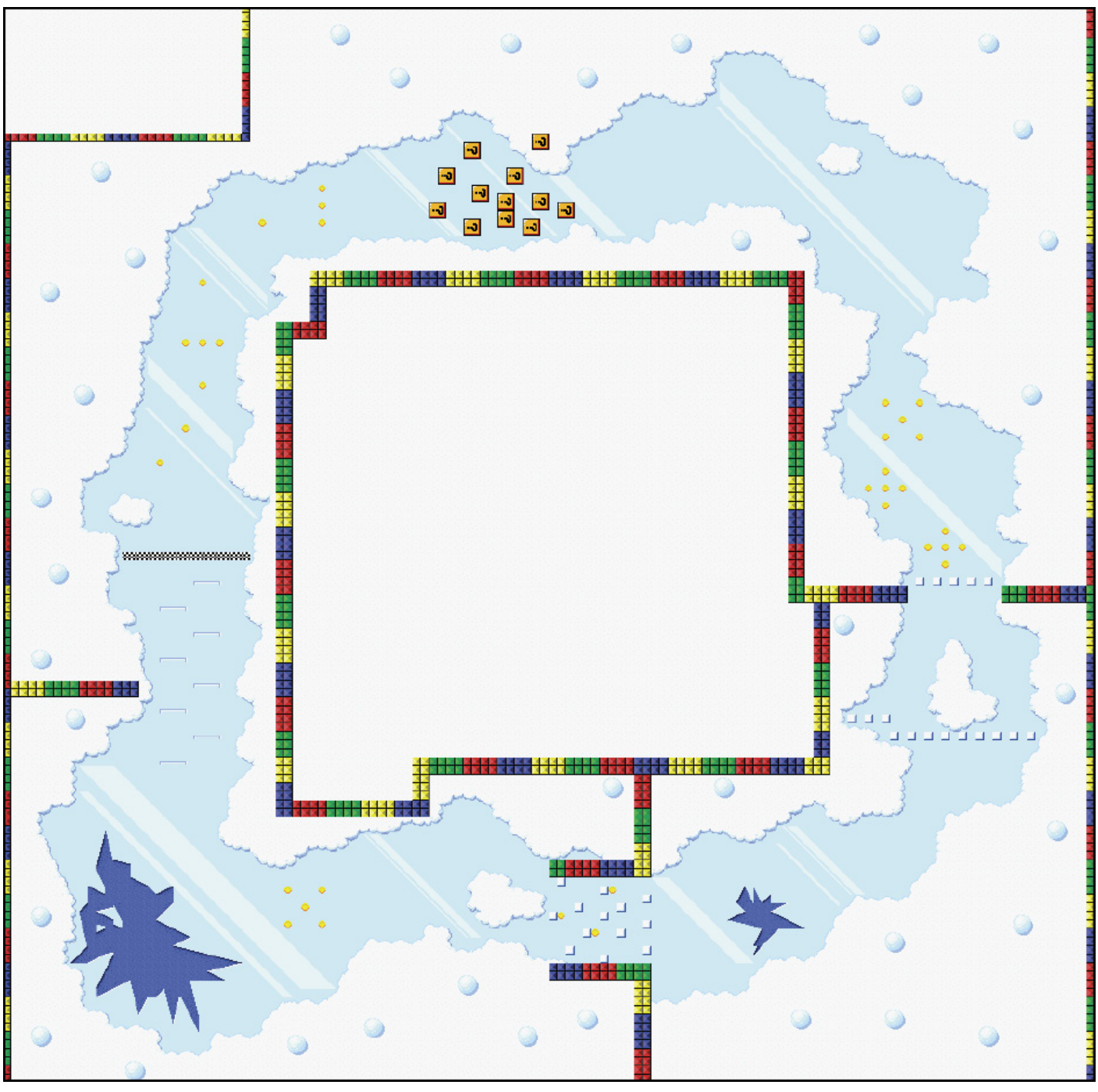
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario Kart

Vanilla Lake

Both Vanilla Lake tracks are essentially circles on ice, except that a giant hole has caused uneven cracks at every turn. You could go wide and avoid the risk of falling in, or throw caution to the icy wind, put the pedal to the metal, and powerslide around the entire track, jumping over the start of each crack as you go.





Vanilla Lake 1

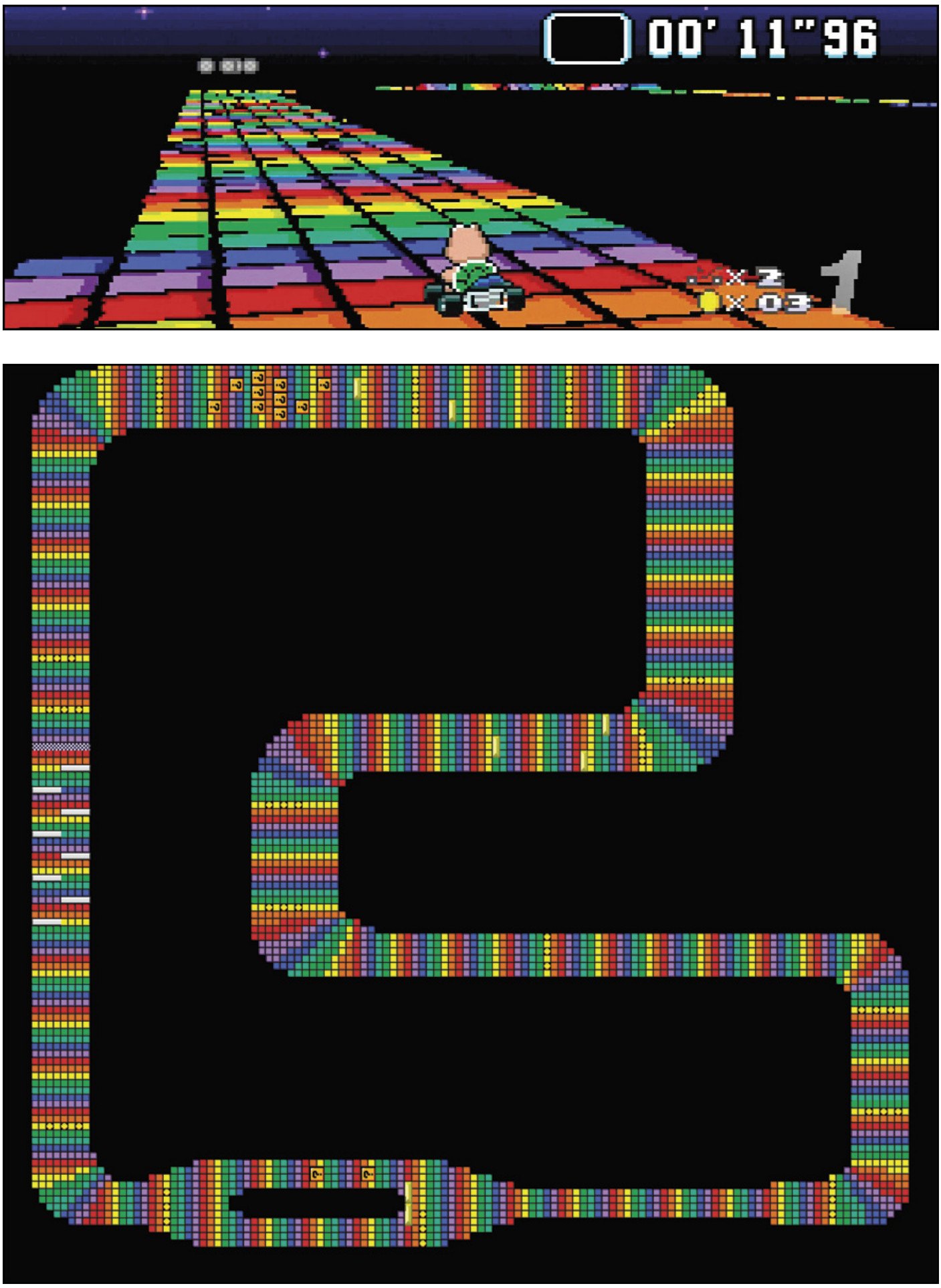
Vanilla Lake 2

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Mario Kart

Rainbow Road

Rainbow Road is without question the most emblematic course in the entire *Mario Kart* franchise. Despite being set in an obsidian abyss a la Ghost Valley, the epic upbeat music and awe-inspiring titular track itself all fulfill the developers' original vision of creating an amusement park experience. Upon reaching this stage there is no doubt that this is the much-deserved climax of the game. Just don't fall off!



Rainbow Road

Cheep Cheep

As they flop around in unpredictable patterns, hitting or being hit by a Cheep Cheep will cause racers to spin out, ruining an otherwise enjoyable day at the beach.

Monty Mole

Monty Moles randomly jump out of their holes and attach themselves to a racer, causing them to lose speed and Coins. The only way to end the encounter is to jump repeatedly to shake them off.

Thwomp & Super Thwomp

Thwomps appear overhead and—after the first lap—systematically smash down onto the track, spinning out any racers at ground zero and blocking any racers who run into them. Super Thwomps appear exclusively on Rainbow Road and also spin out any racer who comes into contact with them.

Super Mario Kart

Battle Mode

In many ways, despite its origin story, *Super Mario Kart* is the opposite of *F-Zero*. From the onset it has always been a party game masquerading as a racing game, and items served as a way to level the playing field whether you were an experienced *F-Zero* pilot or new to gaming altogether. To focus even further on fast-paced split-screen fun with friends and family, Nintendo created gaming's most beloved screaming simulator: Battle Mode.

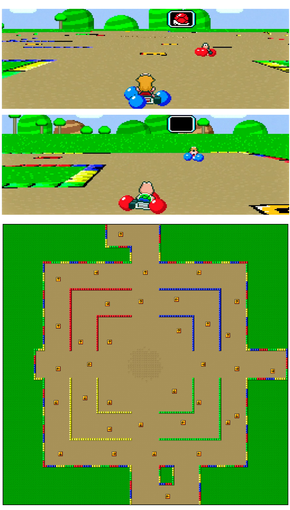
"The thing we spent the most time thinking about was the Battle Mode," Mr. Miyamoto said in an interview appearing in the original *Super Mario Kart* strategy guide. "The very fact that Battle Mode has nothing to do with racing is what made us want to add it, and give it special attention. It helped strengthen the image of the game. It's not, 'You get to become a world-class racer!' but rather, 'You get to race around and play in this go-kart with your friends!'"

> **"The very fact that Battle Mode has nothing to do with racing is what made us want to add it."**

Instead of racing, players face off against each other in one of four unique arenas. Each player has three balloons and must use items to pop all of the opposition's balloons to win. Slick power sliding skills and quick course completions were replaced with cunning, reflexes, and staring at your friend's half of the screen to figure out where they were, then trying to knock them into a corner so you could safely pop their balloons one after another while cackling maniacally.

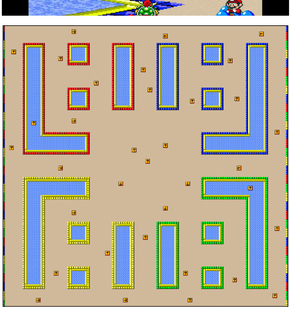
While getting hit by an item when racing is often a source of frustration, getting hit in Battle Mode was just the name of the game. This was pure, unadulterated fun, and was as much a rite of passage in the early 1990s as wearing head-to-toe neon and successfully sticking the straw into a Capri Sun on your first attempt.

Battle Course 1



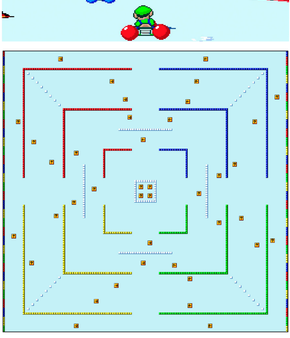
Battle Course 1

Battle Course 2



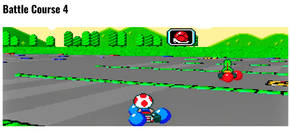
Battle Course 2

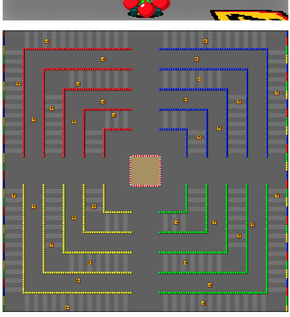
Battle Course 3



Battle Course 3

Battle Course 4





Battle Course 4

1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

Why is everyone so close together on this turn? This seems like a serious hazard.

2 SPINY SHELL

Super Mario Kart is the only entry in the series where the Spiny Shell, aka the Destroyer of Friendships and Consumer of Salty Tears, does not appear.

3 MAGIKOOPA

In Mario Kart 64, Koopa Troopa was originally going to be replaced by Kamek, a Magikoopa, before Wario took his place instead.

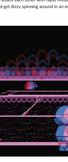
4 THE LIFE OF COINS

Coins in the Mario Kart series have served various functions as they try to find their place in the always changing imaginary economy. After their removal in Mario Kart 64, Coins returned in Mario Kart: Super Circuit with a few adjustments, including an increased speed bonus limit of 55, allowing racers to outrun Red Shells!

In Mario Kart DS Coins were used as part of certain missions, and in Mario Kart Wii they appeared in a special mode called Coin Runners.

With Mario Kart 7 and 8, Coins once again resembled their humble beginnings in Super Mario Kart, increasing players' speed. Coins also became a collectible currency used for unlockables.

Nintendo started to have fun with Coins in Mario Kart 8, replacing them with Rupees in Hyrule Circuit, and Bells on the Animal Crossing track. On the Mute City and Big Blue tracks inspired by F-Zero, Coins are collected via the futuristic Pit Rows.



5 RIVALS

Super Mario Kart features a rival mechanic unique to each racer. Depending on which character you choose, you are assigned rivals of varying speeds. This determines which AI racers finish in which order, and it is always the same, except under rare circumstances. For instance, slower rivals usually get stuck in lower positions if they spin out, but faster rivals quickly recover their pre-assigned positions even after taking a hit. If a fast rival can't catch back up before the race ends, they rank lower than they normally would. Doing this causes a shift in the rivals for the remainder of the cup, and the speed of the rivals has nothing to do with the character's weight class.

Rival Order

MARIO CUP	KOOPA CUP	FLOWER	STAR	EGG CUP

6 OIL CAN

In the early days of development, there was an Oil Can item that would spill out on the track. This item was replaced by the Banana Peel, which works exactly the same, but the oil slick still appears as a hazard on the Mario Circuit tracks.

7 LONELY BATTLEFIELD

Battle Mode was completed very early on in development, but at first there were no obstacles on the battle course. Players could drive around freely and attack each other with rapid fireball attacks, gaining a point for each successful hit. After testing this out, the developers would get dizzy spinning around in an empty field, so they started to add in walls and other landmarks.

8 VB MARIO KART

A German magazine titled Big N claimed in their August 2000 issue that VB Mario Kart, a Mario Kart game for the Virtual Boy, had been canceled along with a number of other titles. However, this was the only mention of the game. Like, ever.

9 FEATHER WAIT

The Feather Item would not appear in a Mario Kart game again until Mario Kart 8 Deluxe, over two decades after Super Mario Kart's release.

10 MARIO VS. LUIGI

Despite often being sidelined in the main Mario Bros. franchise, Luigi's legendary reputation in the high-stakes world of go-kart racing has garnered more Mushroom Cup tracks named after him than his brother. Luigi's Circuit (or Luigi Raceway, as it's called in Mario Kart 64) appears in the Mushroom Cup across three different Mario Kart titles, whereas Mario Circuit only appears in the introductory cup once (Super NES), and Mario Kart Stadium appears in Mario Kart 8 Deluxe.

11 THE DK LINEAGE

Super Mario Kart is the only Mario Kart game to feature Donkey Kong Jr. Due to the success of Donkey Kong Country, all future Mario Kart entries featured Donkey Kong, who is actually Donkey Kong Jr.'s son, with Cranky Kong, aka Donkey Kong Sr., canonically being the character featured in the original Donkey Kong game. Makes sense, right?

12 RUBBING'S RACING

Peeking at your opponent's location in a split-screen game is commonly considered cheating, but not in Super Mario Kart. The instruction booklet actually insists upon it!

13 STARS AND PIPES

When under the effects of the Star Item, driving through an obstacle turns the tables and knocks them out of the race, including pipes! Does anyone know a good plumber?

14 THE PRINCESS

The Princess' name in Japan was Princess Peach since her debut in Super Mario Bros., yet was changed to Princess Toadstool in the English instruction booklet. In later Western releases her name would fluctuate between the two (she even signs her letter to Mario in Super Mario 64 as both), up until Mario Kart 64 in 1996, at which point she became universally referred to as Princess Peach.

15 RAINBOW DEATH TRAP

As discovered in a prototype of the game, Rainbow Road was originally much narrower. However, the AI fell off constantly, so our childhood selves may have them to thank for the track not being even more difficult than it already is.

16 ALTERNATE VICTORY SCREENS

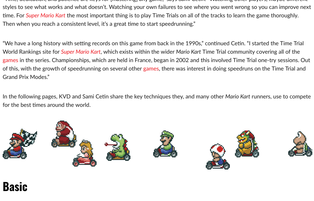
Instead of the giant Cheep Cheep dropping the trophy on your head, in unreleased versions of the game there was a time when securing 2nd place would cause a Super Koopa Troopa to fly by and get hit by the champagne cork. Placing 3rd would result in four flying Koopa Troopas passing overhead, with the last one getting hit by the cork as well.

Video is restricted

Speedrunner KVD and Speedrunner Saml Cetin

World Records Held: KVD: All Cups — 2P (31m 08s), Sam Cetin: Numerous Time Trial Records

"I love how skill in this game is very transparent," says current speedrunning world record holder, KVD. "Even to the untrained eye it is easy to recognize when a highly skilled karter is behind the driving wheel." KVD's competitive nature has always been the driving force behind his time with *Super Mario Kart*. "When I was around 10 years old (1994), my sister and I started out renting this game in the local video games store. I would try and beat the Time Trial records other rentees had set on the cartridge and ended up renting it over and over to keep on (re)claiming those records. Of course I ended up actually getting the game, and at some point I was trying to beat records that had been submitted via letters to the nationwide gaming magazine *Power Unlimited*."



After a bit of a hiatus thanks to something called the Nintendo 64, the dawn of the Internet opened up the competition on a global scale. "I remember one of the first things I searched for was world records for *Super Mario Kart*," explains KVD. "The result completely blew me away and you might as well call it a life-altering event. A guy from the UK called Saml Cetin had driven times that I deemed impossible at first glance. Skeptically, I clicked on the video link provided for the record...I had opened a door to another universe; the level of driving on display in that video pretty much shocked me to the core. I had never seen *video gaming* until that point."

"Of course I was immediately hooked, and little over a year later I became a (Time Trial) World Champion myself."

"Time, dedication, and patience are keys for [mastering] any game," says Saml Cetin. "Watching other players, maybe different styles to see what works and what doesn't. Watching your own failures to see where you went wrong so you can improve next time. For *Super Mario Kart* the most important thing is to play Time Trials on all of the tracks to learn the game thoroughly. Then when you reach a consistent level, it's a great time to start speedrunning."

"We have a long history with setting records on this game from back in the 1990s," continued Cetin. "I started the Time Trial World Rankings site for *Super Mario Kart*, which exists within the wider *Mario Kart* Time Trial community covering all of the games in the series. Championships, which are held in France, began in 2002 and this involved Time Trial one-try sessions. Out of this, with the growth of speedrunning on several other games, there was interest in doing speedruns on the Time Trial and Grand Prix Modes."

In the following pages, KVD and Saml Cetin share the key techniques they, and many other *Mario Kart* runners, use to compete for the best times around the world.

Basic

KVD

CounterSteering

The bread and butter of *Super Mario Kart*, this is an absolute necessity to get those tight corners. It is almost impossible to optimize this, so it falls in the Easy/Intermediate to Learn, Lifetime to Master category. First, approach a corner, turn, and hop a few times. Then, as soon as the corner finishes, tap the opposite turn direction and press Jump once more to straighten up. That is the counterstoop hop. You can mostly just let go of the turn direction and hop to straighten up, but on sharper corners you need more of a forceful straighten-up method, so tap the opposite turn.

For example, in the second corner of Mario Circuit 1, you turn left and hop a few times; then at the end of the turn, let go of the left turn and hop with R to straighten-up and stop drifting out. Corner 3 is sharper, so you can turn left and hop a few times, then as soon as you reach the pipe and have just turned past it, tap Right, turn once, and jump once more with R to straighten up. That's a counterseer hop.

Platform-Jumping (Ghost Valleys)

All the Ghost Valley tracks have a platform-jump; all of them are possible, even in Time Trial. In GP 150cc Mode these moves are actually not that hard, with the extra speed enabling a higher success rate. All that is needed for this is a well-timed jump a few frames before the road ends and you will land on the other side. The move itself is easy to learn, but dealing with the driving trajectory after landing is where the real challenge is.

Manual Jump-Plate Skips (Bower Castles, Ghost Valleys, and Rainbow Road)

Instead of choosing to hit the jump-plates on Bowser Castles to make it across the lava when driving over the islands, you can manually jump over them. Hitting these jump-plates makes you lose a lot of momentum; successfully navigating the Bowser Castles without hitting any literally wins seconds. Though each individual jump-plate skip is not too hard, it is quite a challenge to line them all up properly, on Bowser Castle 3 in particular. Avoiding jump-plates is a good idea in general; if you hit some of them with full speed, you overshoot the intended landing strip and end up in the lava...oops!

Mushroom-Assisted Wall-Skip on Donut Plains 3

This looks quite impressive, but it's surprisingly easy to pull off. All you need is to fire a Mushroom in the sweet spot (there is a little bit of leniency for where the sweet spot is, too), directly perpendicular to the wall. This move is executed immediately after the second bridge, using the Mushroom to cross the wall next to the finish line. Be sure to stay to the left of the finish line, otherwise the next lap will not trigger. It is normally not possible to skip across walls using Mushrooms, but because there is some water before the wall, your kart bounces on that when you use the Mushroom and carries you over. There are similar Mushroom-assisted wall-skips on the other two Donut Plains tracks, but those are much harder to pull off due to the shape of the water and the position of the wall. When you're given the Mushroom, this is pretty much a free six-second gain on Donut Plains 3!

Advanced

Saml Cetin

New Boosting Technique (NBT)

The new boosting techniques involve generating mini-turbos by holding the L/R Jump button while sliding around a corner and zig zagging with the D-pad to charge the boost, then counterstearing and releasing the L/R Jump, or counter-jumping to generate a mini-turbo boost. If this is executed just before a bit of off-road terrain (grass/sand/mud/light water/snow), the kart boosts across the small patch of off-road terrain at high speed. This boost is very short, but you can generate it again on other corners. If executed on a road, it saves on Time Trial around 0.06 seconds on PAL and 0.10 seconds on NTSC. The length of the boost varies on each version. It is *Super Mario Kart*'s equivalent of a mini-turbo from the other games in the Mario Kart series, except no colorful sparks come out of the kart; the engine sound just increases a little and the kart sometimes twitches to the side. These are the main driving strategies on Time Trial for speedrunning and record setting.

KVD

Gas-Releasing

This is actually very easy to execute, but belongs in the advanced section anyway, as it is an extension of the boosting mechanics. When you're still off-road at the time a boost runs out, you experience immediate and harsh slowdown. This can be circumvented by releasing the Gas button toward the end of the boost. You still slow down, but at a much slower rate.

Saml Cetin

Long-Boosting (LB)

Long-boosting is another advanced technique in *Super Mario Kart*. It is generated with a Mushroom that gives you a burst of speed, or one of the yellow arrows (zippers) which can be seen on the Bowser Castle tracks, Mario Circuit 2 (just before the jump over the road), Mario Circuit 3, and Ghost Valley 3, which give the same effect. You basically line yourself up with a wall/corner, use the Mushroom, and just before you impact the wall at high speed, let go of B, jump with R at the wall, and hold R down. You must make sure B is released before impact, otherwise this will not work.

If executed correctly, you bounce off the wall and zoom off at high speed for maybe three to four seconds, then you can press B and revert to normal driving. This is a long-boost, and ideally needs to be done where there is a big open space in front of you. Choco Island 1 has one of the best spots, as you can long-boost off a wall and drive on one of the little bumps on the road which makes you bounce high. Sometimes you can hit more of them, which keeps you jumping high and extends the length of the long boost a bit more. The same can be triggered with the yellow arrows on the Bowser Castles, where you can also do it in a reverse way, by jumping against a wall after already releasing B and holding R. The kart goes into a slow skid motion for a few moments, then you hit an arrow, which makes your kart drive at long-boost speed. Using Bowser Castle 1 as an example, you can go on the arrows in this manner, and if you have a Feather, turn to the left and use it with the higher burst of speed to jump across the hairpin and land on the final corner.

This can also be generated on the big jump of Mario Circuit 2 (in Time Trial also) but it is tricky. Touch the arrows, release B, and jump with R. If triggered at the right time, you bounce off the arrows and jump at high speed, hopefully clearing the wall. You can steer to the left and boost through all of the sand on the next few corners. It is hard to get a strong enough long boost, but with practice testing out the angles, it can be done.

KVD

Infinite Boosting (IB)

A speed boost that can essentially last forever! The IB can only be achieved by releasing the gas while boosting over turbo arrows; then, for as long as no buttons other than the directions are pressed, and no obstacle is hit, a full-speed boost lasts and lasts! This strategy is mainly used on Mario Circuit 3, though some expert players are also known to perform it on Ghost Valley 2. In GP 150cc it is borderline impossible to finish a full lap with an intact IB, though it can still be used to cut a few corners until the hairpin. In Match Race it is routinely used for entire laps. It's a bit easier to manage with Mario and Luigi (and the other smaller characters), who have much more forgiving turning angles.

Expert

KVD

Scouby Feather

This is a Feather move invented by the current SMK multiplayer World Champion, Julien Holmiere (nicknamed Scoulli). Essentially you are using a Feather to generate a long boost. Though you don't get the crazy speed that you would when firing a Mushroom, it still means you can cross off-road areas without losing as much speed. It is used on Choco Island 1 at the finish line. You need to boost backwards toward the wall, trigger the Feather, rebound into the wall at the onset of the Feather, pass the wall to the far right to circumvent the finish line, and hold R down during the landing to circle back through the chocolate. As the Feather move spends very little time in contact with the ground, the timing is extremely hard. It's something else when it's successful, though.

Pipe Boosting

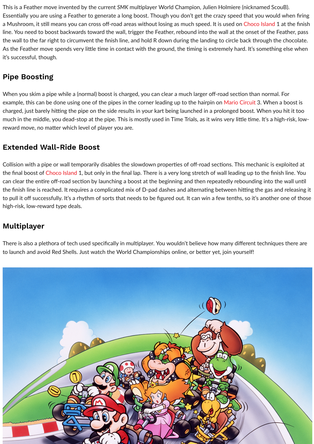
When you skim a pipe while a (normal) boost is charged, you can clear a much larger off-road section than normal. For example, this can be done using one of the pipes in the corner leading up to the hairpin on Mario Circuit 3. When a boost is charged, just barely hitting the pipe on the side results in your kart being launched in a prolonged boost. When you hit it too much in the middle, you dead-stop at the pipe. This is mostly used in Time Trials, as it wins very little time. It's a high-risk, low-reward move, no matter which level of player you are.

Extended Wall-Ride Boost

Collision with a pipe or wall temporarily disables the slowdown properties of off-road sections. This mechanic is exploited at the final boost of Choco Island 1, but only in the final lap. There is a very long stretch of wall leading up to the finish line. You can clear the entire off-road section by launching a boost at the beginning and then repeatedly rebounding into the wall until the finish line is reached. It requires a complicated mix of D-pad dashes and alternating between hitting the gas and releasing it to pull it off successfully. It's a rhythm of sorts that needs to be figured out. It can win a few tenths, so it's another one of those high-risk, low-reward type deals.

Multiplayer

There is also a plethora of tech used specifically in multiplayer. You wouldn't believe how many different techniques there are to launch and avoid Red Shells. Just watch the World Championships online, or better yet, join yourself!



The Mario Kart franchise has been a phenomenal success, even outselling traditional Mario titles on certain platforms such as the Wii U, where *Mario Kart 8* was the system's best-selling game of all time.

The success can largely be attributed to the accessibility of the series; it was designed so that anyone could pick up and play. More importantly, it was always designed with a social aspect in mind, so that anyone could pick up and play with friends. Each entry has added something new, but was built upon the same foundation laid by the original development team way back in 1992.

Mario Kart 64

1997, Nintendo 64

Mario Kart 64 introduced the series to 3D environments, four-player split-screen, and the Spiny Shell. Power-sliding also enabled increasingly powerful mini-turbos based on how long the slide was held—this new feature would come to be as synonymous with kart games as items themselves.

Mario Kart: Super Circuit

2001, Game Boy Advance

Released for the Game Boy Advance, *Super Circuit* more closely resembles *Super Mario Kart* than *Mario Kart 64*. In fact, the entirety of *Super Mario Kart*'s selection of courses is unlockable in *Super Circuit*, marking the introduction of retro tracks, which would become a staple of future installments.

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!

2003, Nintendo GameCube

Double Dash!! greatly expanded the roster of racers and paired them off, with one racer driving and the other racer hanging off the back of the kart and using items. This was the only game to feature two riders in one kart.

Mario Kart DS

2005, Nintendo DS

Mario Kart DS introduced Mission Mode and boss battles for a bit of gameplay variety. On the technological side, it offered wireless multiplayer via a number of options.

Mario Kart Wii

2008, Wii

Mario Kart Wii introduced motorcycles and tricks to the classic formula, as well as allowing Miis to get in on the fun. *Mario Kart Wii* is the best-selling *Mario Kart* game ever produced, moving an astounding 36.95M units.

Mario Kart 7

2011, 3DS

Returning once more to the next generation of Nintendo handhelds, *Mario Kart 7* for the 3DS introduced first-person racing, customizable vehicles, unlockable parts, underwater tracks, and hang glider attachments.

Mario Kart 8

2014, Wii U

Mario Kart 8 provides the most visually impressive *Mario Kart* yet, truly bringing the amusement park design of each track to life. Courses have more shortcuts and paths than ever before, thanks to anti-gravity sections where players can drive on walls and ceilings. ATVs were added in addition to the motorcycles from *Mario Kart Wii*, as well as a new 200cc engine class.

Mario Kart 8 was the first *Mario Kart* game to have downloadable content sold after its release, adding tracks and characters from non-*Mario* franchises such as *The Legend of Zelda*, *Animal Crossing*, *Excitebike*, and *F-Zero*.

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe

2017, Nintendo Switch

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe was released shortly after the launch of the Nintendo Switch, letting players take the entirety of *Mario Kart 8*'s content on the go, equating to an unparalleled 48 courses and 42 playable racers. The revamped Battle Mode featured five different options, such as the classic Balloon Battle, as well as other variations including Bom-omb Blast from *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!* and Coin Runners from *Mario Kart Wii*.

Mario Kart Arcade GP, Mario Kart Arcade GP 2, Mario Kart Arcade GP DX

2005/2008/2014, Arcade

Across nearly a decade, Namco's *Mario Kart* titles were released exclusively in arcades. Although the games largely resembled their console counterparts, the Arcade GP series did feature a large number of unique items such as Pic Tacks, and even Sticky Oil, paying tribute to the unused Oil Can item from the original game. Several Namco characters also guest-starred, including Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, Blinky, a Tamagotchi pet, and a few sentient drums from the Taiko: Drum Master games.

Super Mario Kart

Super Mario Kart Credits

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi

Producer

Shigeru Miyamoto

Programmers

Masato Kimura

Hajime Yajima

Kenji Yamamoto

C.G. Designers

Tadashi Sugiyama

Naoki Mori

Sound Composers

Soyo Oka

Taro Bando

Illustrators

Yoichi Kotabe

Mie Yoshimura

Yoshiaki Koizumi

Manual Editor

Atsushi Tejima

Directors

Tadashi Sugiyama

Hidequi Konno

F-Zero

Overview

DEVELOPER

Nintendo EAD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: November 21, 1990

NA: August 23, 1991

In the latter half of the 20th century, Mankind was gripped by the fear of being invaded by extraterrestrials. They referred to extraterrestrial spacecraft as UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects). Now, to those of us in this day and age, this sounds like a fairy tale. It is now the year 2560, and due to the human race's countless encounters with alien life forms throughout the Universe, Earth's social framework has expanded to cosmic proportions. Now, trade, technology transfer, and cultural interchange are carried out on an interplanetary basis.

The multibillionaires who earned their enormous wealth through intergalactic trade, while satisfied with their rich lifestyles, also yearned for a new entertainment to stimulate their lazy lives. Their wishes were met by a call for a new project based upon a seemingly simple premise—"Why not hold, on a galactic scale, some competition like the F-1 races once held on Earth centuries ago?"

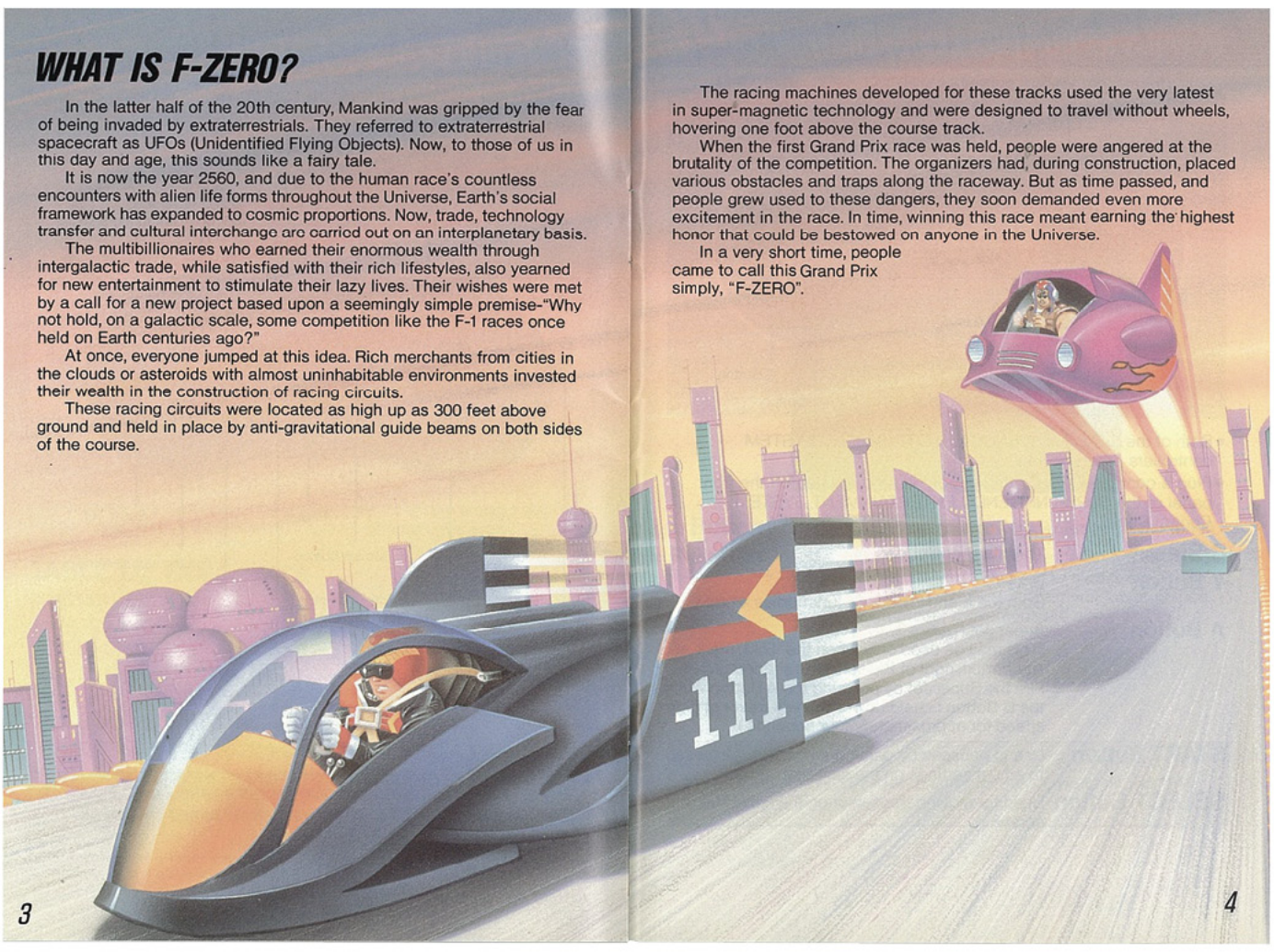
At once, everyone jumped at this idea. Rich merchants from cities in the clouds or asteroids with almost uninhabitable environments invested their wealth in the construction of racing circuits.

These racing circuits were located as high up as 300 feet above ground and held in place by anti-gravitational guide beams on both sides of the course.

The racing machines developed for these tracks used the very latest in super-magnetic technology and were designed to travel without wheels, hovering one foot above the course track.

When the first Grand Prix race was held, people were angered at the brutality of the competition. The organizers had, during construction, placed various obstacles and traps along the raceway. But as time passed, and people grew used to these dangers, they soon demanded even more excitement in the race. In time, winning this race meant earning the highest honor that could be bestowed on anyone in the Universe.

In a very short time, people came to call this Grand Prix simply, "F-ZERO".



F-Zero

Development

One of only two launch titles for the Super Famicom, Nintendo put a lot of faith in *F-Zero*. While Mario provided a familiar face to millions of potential 16-bit adopters around the globe, *F-Zero* was intended to provide the "wow" factor in regard to the system's technical capabilities. That's exactly what it did, forever changing the course of racing games in the process.

> **"As mesmerizing to watch as it was to play..."**

"We knew we were going to need a racing series for the new Super Famicom console," producer Shigeru Miyamoto said in the 1994 book, *Introduction to Game Design*. "We didn't want to do a port of a pre-existing game, and in our first drafts the screen was horizontal and you viewed the ships from their side. During the prototype phase we tested various ideas, getting a feel for the capabilities of the new [Super Famicom] hardware as we went. It turned out that with the horizontal view for *F-Zero*, the perspective didn't allow us to draw three-dimensional objects like bank curves, and without that, how could the game be interesting?"

"On top of that," Mr. Miyamoto said, "we wanted to draw player character vehicles that looked more alive and vigorous, but if we added tires to the vehicles the required memory would be doubled. And if you added smoke from the tires during drifting, it would be even more. So because of all that, the cars became hovercrafts."

Similar racing and driving titles up to this point had mostly used smoke and mirrors to give a sense of movement, often placing the player vehicle on a figurative conveyor belt, driving in place while rival vehicles and environments moved toward them. More recent titles attempted fully polygonal graphics, but at the cost of speed and frame rate due to the intense computational power required. The Super NES's Mode 7 allowed for a background layer to rotate and scale on the fly, more fluidly simulating a 3D effect.

Combined with the game's unusual (at the time) futuristic setting and the Super NES's increased capacity for displaying colors, *F-Zero* was a visually vibrant and immediately exhilarating event, as mesmerizing to watch as it was to play. Like the game's official story says, it was the future of racing.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

F-Zero
Gameplay

If *F-Zero* had been a mere tech demo with amazing visuals but shallow gameplay, the game's impact would have been considerably less profound. Nintendo's Entertainment Analysis & Development (EAD) Division, spearheaded by Mr. Miyamoto, wasn't interested in creating an aesthetically pleasing husk. "The important thing is how the game feels in the first 2 or 3 minutes. That's the window of time in which the player's heart is seized," Mr. Miyamoto explained in *Introduction to Game Design*.

Like *Super Mario World*, *F-Zero* provides players with a seemingly simple set of mechanics with no small amount of hidden depth. The basic formula is familiar enough. Each Grand Prix consists of five races; each race takes place on a unique track and has five laps. *F-Zero* uses elimination-style rankings, requiring the player to move further up in position each lap or risk being disqualified.

The game's 15 unique tracks are split among three leagues: Knight, Queen, and King. Each league has four different difficulty settings (with the fourth, Master, being unlocked upon successfully completing the league on Expert difficulty). There are also four different racers, each with their own strengths and weaknesses that modify the way every aspect of the game needs to be approached.

> **"The important thing is how the game feels in the first 2 or 3 minutes."**

The game starts out innocuously enough, with Knight League tracks like Mute City I and Big Blue introducing basic elements such as leisurely turns, jumps, and rough patches that can slow vehicles down. New players undoubtedly learn the hard way about the Anti-Gravity Guide Beam that encapsulates the track, but it's the backmarker racers who quickly become the bane of any *F-Zero* aficionado. Even on the easiest tracks, these randomly generated vehicles begin appearing after the first lap and can force the player into tricky or seemingly impossible situations. That super easy turn you made on the first lap? Now there's a slow vehicle in your driving line. From a design perspective it was a clever way to ensure each lap always provided a somewhat unique challenge; from a gamer perspective, it was the #1 cause of UCDs (Unnatural Controller Death) in the early 1990s.

Each vehicle has a set amount of Power, which can be depleted by ramming other pilots, hitting the guide beam, or touching magnetic rails and land mines. Once the Power bar is gone, the vehicle explodes and the race needs to be restarted. If all of a player's "spare machines" are used, they can no longer compete in the current Grand Prix. Pit Row automatically repairs damaged vehicles when driven through, and became a staple of the futuristic racing subgenre.

Completing a lap provides a Super Jet, which is a manual turbo boost that lasts four seconds. While logic would dictate a speed boost is best used on straightaways, the Super Jet allows vehicles to drive through rough patches without losing speed or survive certain shortcut jumps that would otherwise be impossible. Making use of the SNES's new L and R shoulder buttons, vehicles in *F-Zero* can shift their weight to either side, allowing additional precision when taking sharp turns or avoiding hazards. Mastery of these two mechanics is key to succeeding.

Explosive death got you down? Earn spare machines for every 10,000 points accumulated! Placing in better positions each lap, and at the end of each circuit, provides higher points.

It's not long before *F-Zero* begins to ramp up the difficulty, introducing increasingly technical tracks with 90-degree turns, S-turns, U-turns, and a variety of obstacles and hazards, not the least of which being land mines sprinkled throughout certain tracks like Red Canyon and Fire Field. Magnetic poles in Port Town suck the player's vehicle toward them, doing damage and reducing speed when contact is made.

In first place, anything less than perfect racing causes the named AI pilots to magically appear from behind and try to overtake you. The always looming guide beam is incredibly dangerous at high speeds and in the game's many tight corridors, causing the player to bounce uncontrollably and rapidly dwindling away their Power.

F-Zero is arguably one of Nintendo's most difficult titles. Completing all three Grand Prix Leagues in first place, let alone on Master, was a true badge of honor for early Super NES adopters.

▶GIVE UP

If you press the START button during play, the game will pause, and the screen will change as shown on the right. Select whether or not to Give Up or Continue the game by selecting "YES" or "NO", respectively. (Do this by selecting with Left or Right on the ✣ Control Pad, and entering the selection with the START Button. If you select YES and you have a spare machine, "TRY AGAIN" or "END GAME" will appear on the screen. Select one of these choices. If you select TRY AGAIN, the screen will return to the start of the course that you were on. If you press END GAME, the screen will return to the Title screen.

PRACTICE

This is a practice game mode containing seven of the courses from the GRAND PRIX mode. After you have selected your machine, next select the rival machine you are to race against. If you do not want to race against a rival, select "NO RIVAL". (Your rival's speed increases in the following order: BLUE FALCON, GOLDEN FOX, WILD GOOSE, and FIRE STINGRAY.) No machine's other than the rival machine that you have chosen will appear in this mode. The game will start once you have chosen the course on which you wish to travel (by using the SELECT Button or Up or Down on the ✣ Control Pad). After you have travelled five laps, you will view your lap time, total time and the best five course times so far. After completing the course (or when you have given up), you may try the same race again, end the current game, choose a new course, or change to a different machine or rival as shown on the screen below.

9

RECORDS

If you make a new record in either the GRAND PRIX or PRACTICE modes, this screen will appear. In this mode, the best ten times and laps for the courses completed so far from all of the 15 courses will be recorded and displayed. Records underlined in red are GRAND PRIX records, while records underlined in green are PRACTICE records. Times are recorded automatically when the lap times are allowed to be completely displayed after the course is completed. If the SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM® is reset while doing this, the time may not be recorded.
To erase all records in each of the courses, press the SELECT Button at the RECORDS screen. This will display the message "ERASE? YES/NO". Select YES and press the START Button.
(Records are saved to the Game Pak's battery backed memory even when the power is turned OFF.)

10

7 Short Cut Fouls
Some short cutting is allowed, such as flying outside of the course to gain distance at curves, etc. by use of a jump plate. However, the official recorder may rule an extreme short cut to be a foul, and you may be subject to being pulled back to any position at the recorder's discretion.

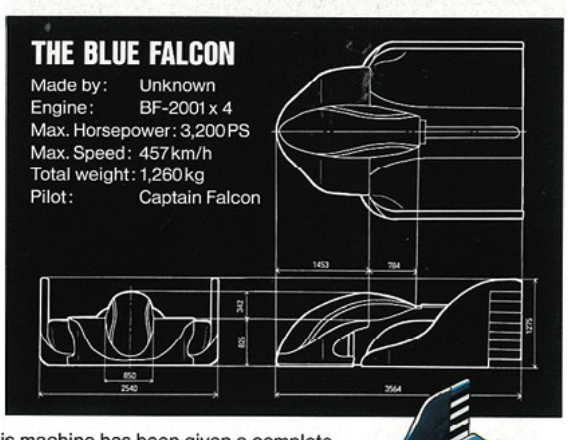
8 About Pit Runs
In each course, a Pit Row area is provided at fixed areas near the home straight or nearby. Machines can have their power restored from the official car only when within the designated Pit Row area. The amount of power that will be transferred to your machine is proportional to the time that you spend within the Pit Row area. To receive maximum power it is advisable that Pit Runs be made at a slow speed.

9 Special Rule in Variance to Rule 2:
This rule is limited only to the following four machines: BLUE FALCON, GOLDEN FOX, WILD GOOSE, and FIRE STINGRAY. If any of these machines fall below the rank of 20th place at any time during the race, they will be subject to immediate and compulsory disqualification by the official recorder.

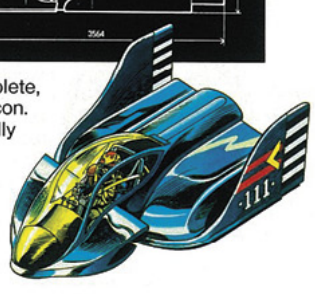
13

THE MACHINES & THEIR PILOTS

THE BLUE FALCON
Made by: Unknown
Engine: BF-2001 x 4
Max. Horsepower: 3,200PS
Max. Speed: 457km/h
Total weight: 1,260kg
Pilot: Captain Falcon



This machine has been given a complete, well-balanced tuning by Captain Falcon. Even beginners will be able to skillfully drive the machine after only a little practice.



CAPTAIN FALCON
From Port Town. Age unknown. (Rumored to be in his early 30's.)
Besides being an accomplished F-ZERO pilot, he is a renowned and talented bounty hunter. Not much is known about his past.

14

MACH RIDER

Nintendo's *Mach Rider* for the NES is often looked to as the spiritual predecessor to *F-Zero*. The futuristic setting and high-octane racing could be a coincidence, but Mach Rider's striking similarity to Captain Falcon is hard to deny.

Nintendo has further connected the two games via the *Super Smash Bros.* series. In *Super Smash Bros. Melee*, a remix medley of the *Mach Rider* soundtrack is used as an alternate track for the Big Blue stage. And in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*, the remix medley returns, this time tied to a different *F-Zero*-themed arena, Port Town.

Nintendo

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

F-Zero

The Machines and Their Pilots

Each of the four playable "machines" offers a combination of varying acceleration, top speed, handling, and power. While most players in the '90s likely chose a machine based on its design and its pilot, the differences between them have a substantial impact on playstyle. The F-Zero instruction booklet offers a detailed look at the machines and their pilots:

Captain Falcon

Origin	Port Town
Age	Early 30s (rumored)

"Besides being an accomplished F-Zero pilot, Captain Falcon is a renowned and talented bounty hunter. Not much is known about his past."

Blue Falcon

Engine	BF-2001 x4
Max Power	3200ps
Max Speed	457km/h
Weight	1240kg

"This machine has been given a complete, well-balanced tuning by Captain Falcon. Even beginners will be able to skillfully drive the machine after only a little practice."

Dr. Stewart

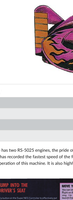
ORIGIN	MUTE CITY
Age	31

"Though he had followed the lifestyle of the elite as an accomplished and well-respected medical doctor, Robert Stewart has participated in the F-Zero Grand Prix as the pilot of the Golden Fox since the death of his father the scientist, Professor Kevin Stewart."

Golden Fox

Engine	GF-2654 x4
Max Power	2950ps
Max Speed	437km/h
Weight	1020kg

"During the design and construction of this machine, its developer, Kevin Stewart (now deceased), gave priority to acceleration. In compensation for its power output, the body was made to be light to reduce the G-force on the course surface. This characteristic makes it difficult to strike a good balance between tuning and engine power, resulting in difficult cornering. It is an undeniable fact that the Golden Fox stands up poorly to impact. Pilots using this machine are required to have a high level of skill."



Pico

ORIGIN	DEATH WIND
Age	34

"Believed to be an ex-soldier who worked in the Polipoto Army's Special Fighting Unit. Pico is a highly aggressive pilot, and his cold heart is a perfect complement to this. Officially, his occupation is an F-Zero pilot, but, it is rumored that he is also a competent hitman."

Wild Goose

Engine	ES-8302 x3
Max Power	3670ps
Max Speed	462km/h
Weight	1420kg

"This machine is designed to withstand very heavy damage. The primary purpose of its design was to allow it to run using a highly aggressive racing style. The soldier who designed the Wild Goose is a member of the Polipoto tribe of Death Wind—a tribe with a strong fighting spirit."

Samurai Goroh

Origin	Unknown
Age	Early 40s (approximation)

"The leader of a renegade band of thieves known to hide out in Red Canyon. It is known that he participates in the Grand Prix under an alias, and it is also rumored that this machine is stolen property."

Fire Stingray

Engine	RS-5025 x2
Max Power	3800ps
Max Speed	478km/h
Weight	1960kg

"This machine has two RS-5025 engines, the pride of the Universe. It is a heavily-bodied machine and accelerates very slowly. This machine has recorded the fastest speed of the four main machines. Careful and perfectly timed use of the S-Jet is a key point in the operation of this machine. It is also highly rated for its stability while cornering."

SUPER NOSTALGIA

Back in the day, Nintendo Power provided fans with a cool, fold-out poster to show their love of the game.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

F-Zero

Tracks Overview

A notable aspect of the original *F-Zero* that sometimes gets lost in the shuffle when discussing its audio/visual achievements is its world-building. Like with the racers and machines, each city and planet hosting an *F-Zero* track is given its own backstory. This dedication to in-depth layering beyond the magnetic raceways of the game is further embellished in its sequels as well as a 51-episode anime that debuted in 2003.

KNIGHT LEAGUE	QUEEN LEAGUE	KING LEAGUE
Mute City I	Mute City II	Mute City III
Big Blue	Port Town I	Death Wind II
Sand Ocean	Red Canyon I	Port Town II
Death Wind I	White Land I	Red Canyon II
Silence	White Land II	Fire Field

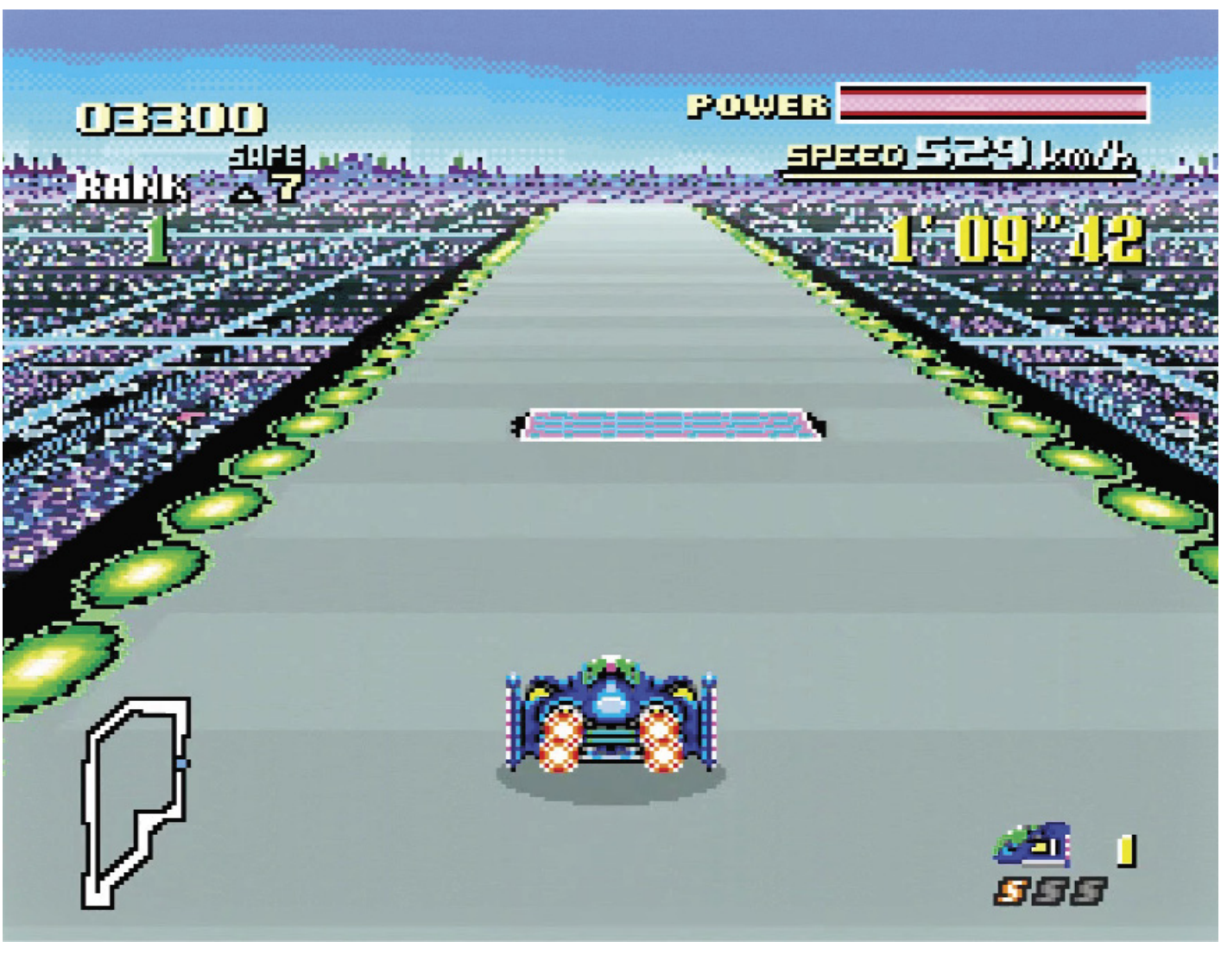
Cardholder's Name

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

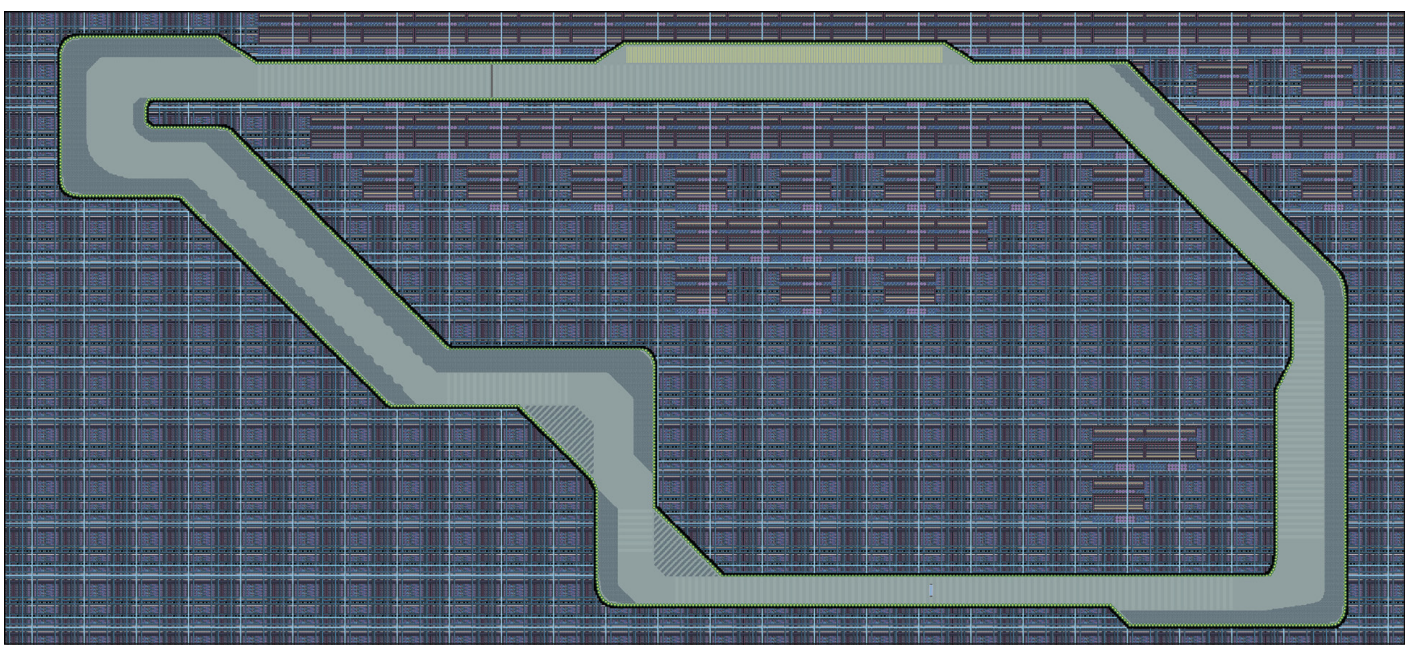
F-Zero

Mute City I/II/III

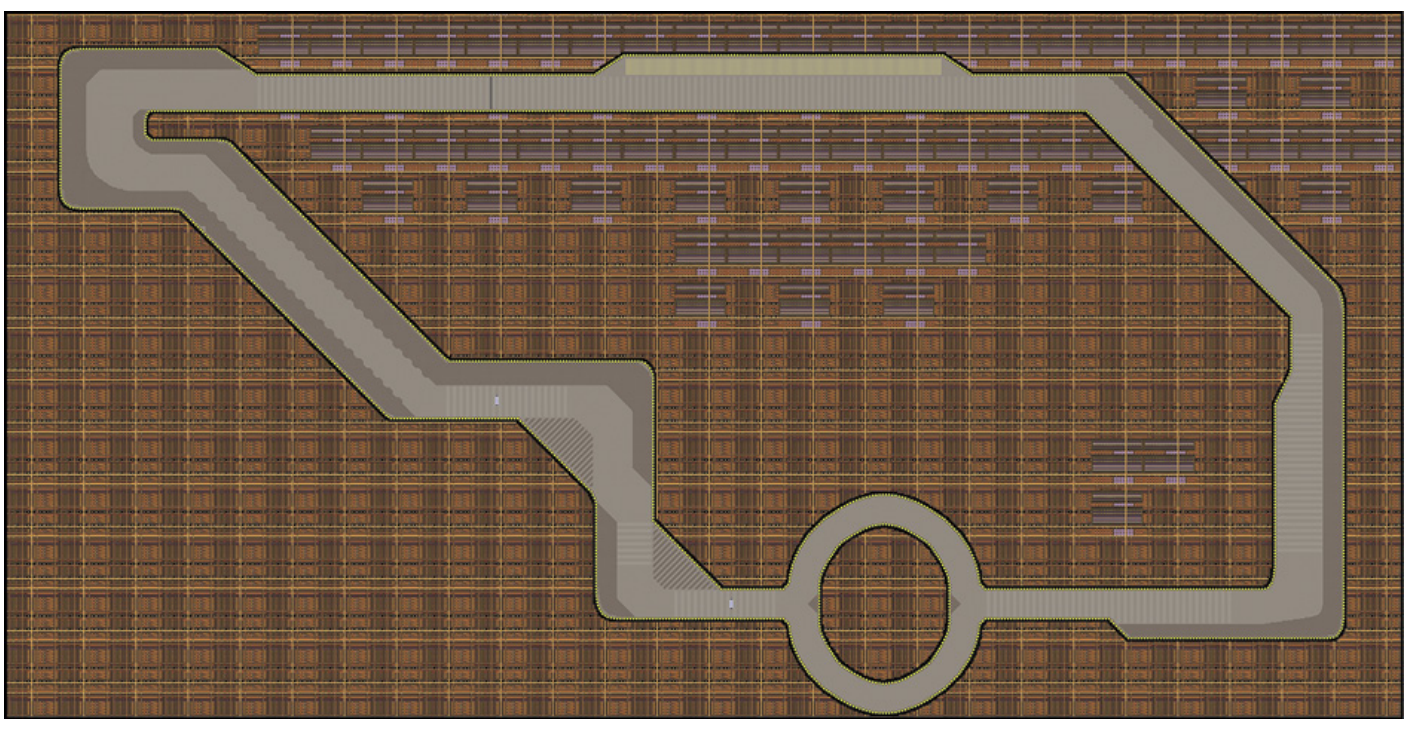
Originally called Mutant City, this is the largest city among all of the Space Federation Planets with a population of over 200 million denizens. Mute City is also home to the opening race of each league in the *F-Zero* Grand Prix.



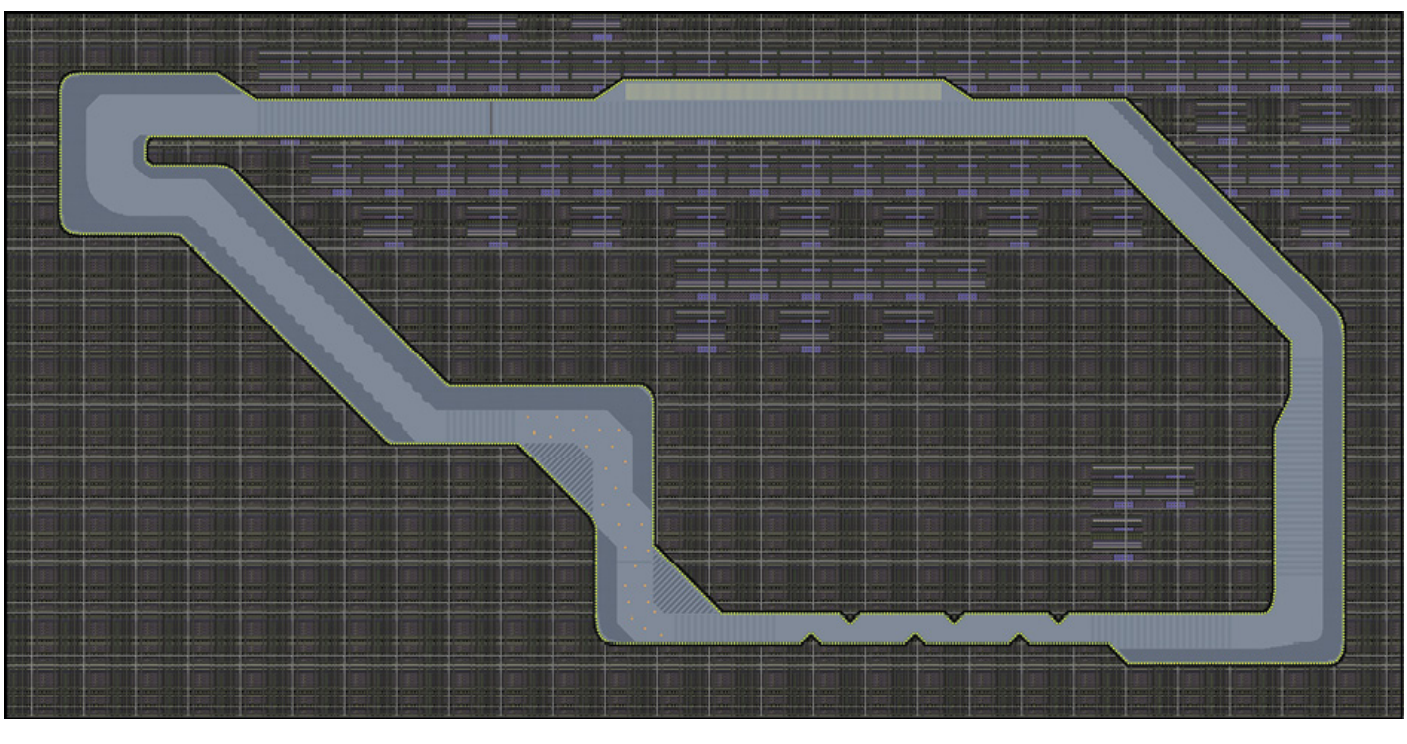
For everything the game explains about Mute City, it's the things that aren't said that leave players most intrigued. As tiny dots of light traverse *TheFifth Element*-style multilayered metropolis far below, one wonders, what must the world of *F-Zero* be like, so many centuries advanced beyond our own?



Mute City I



Mute City II



Mute City III

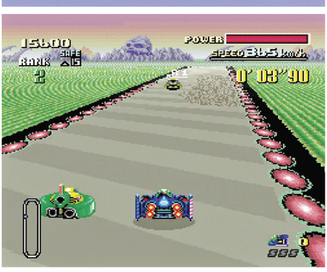
Nintendo

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

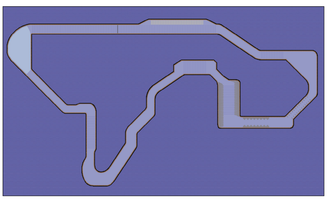
F-Zero

Big Blue, Sand Ocean, Death Wind I/II

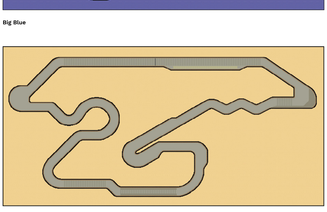
Unlike the bustling megalopolis of Mute City, 99% of Big Blue's surface is covered in water, while the entirety of Sand Ocean is said to be covered in dunes. Death Wind is described as "the most peaceful place in the Universe," yet has fierce winds that blow without respite.



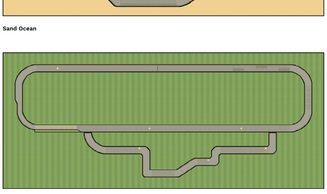
Big Blue, Sand Ocean, and Death Wind may be elementally divergent, but they all serve the same purpose—color! In case you needed a reminder that the brand-new Super Nintendo Entertainment System you just got for Christmas was truly faster and more beautiful than its predecessor, these visually vibrant courses provide adequate evidence. They're also the last tracks in the game you'll play without throwing your controller at least once.



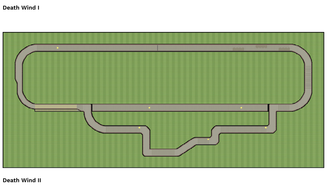
Big Blue



Sand Ocean



Death Wind I

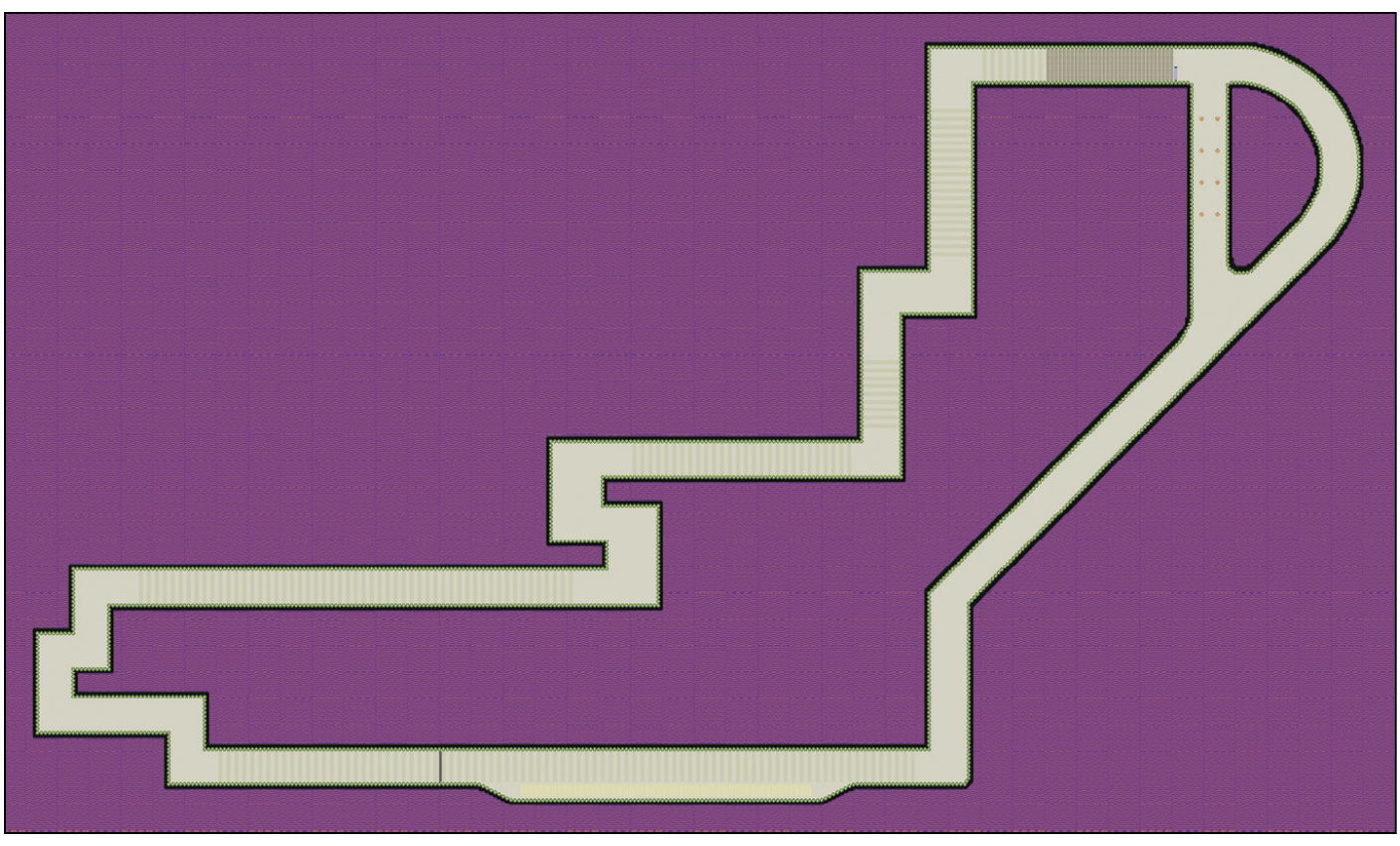


Death Wind II

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

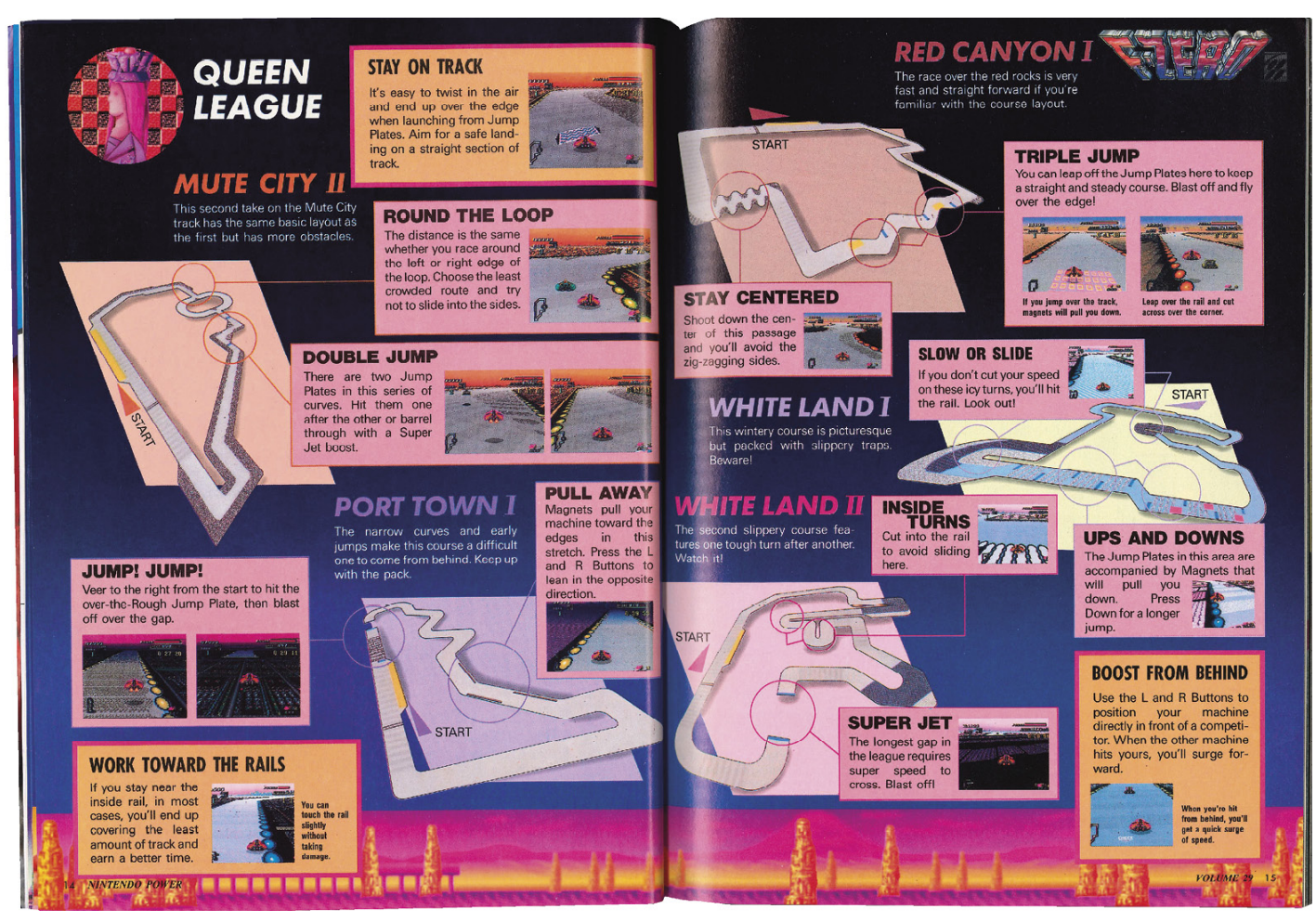
F-Zero

Silence



Silence

A truly soundless planet, where not even a single noise can be heard—aside from all the anti-gravity Grand Prix racers boosting, sliding, and exploding, right? The final course of the Knight League consists primarily of 90-degree turns (a design mirrored later by Bowser Castle in *Super Mario Kart*), challenging players to approach cornering entirely differently than the first three races.

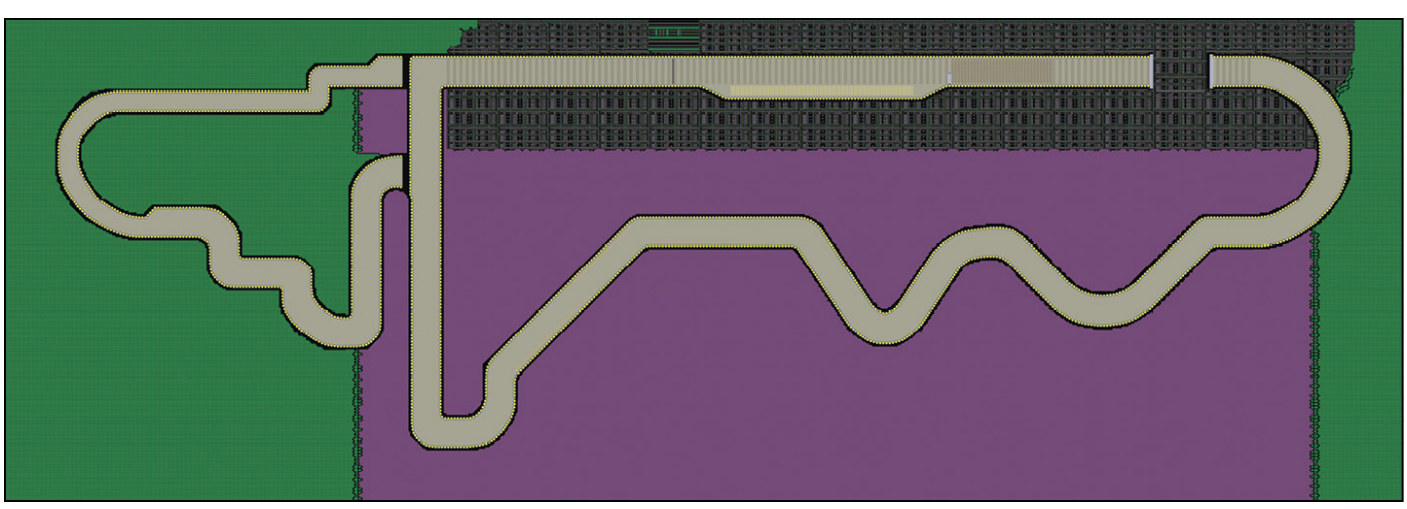


Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

F-Zero

Port Town I/II

Port Town is known partially as a relay point for intergalactic trade, and partially for being one of the more technically demanding courses, employing pull magnets, forced-deceleration zones, and a variety of other obstacles. The daily commute here must be rough.



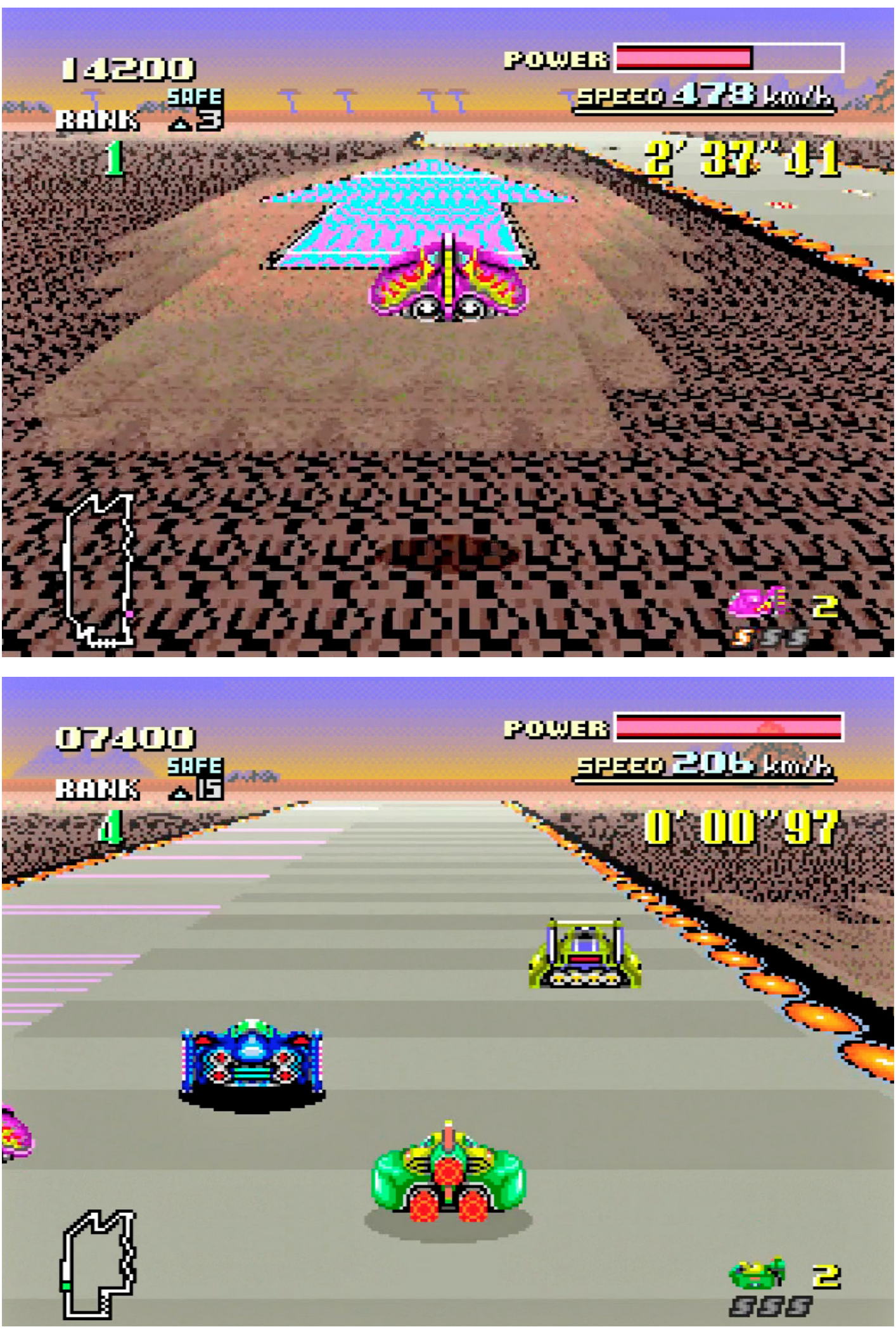
Port Town I

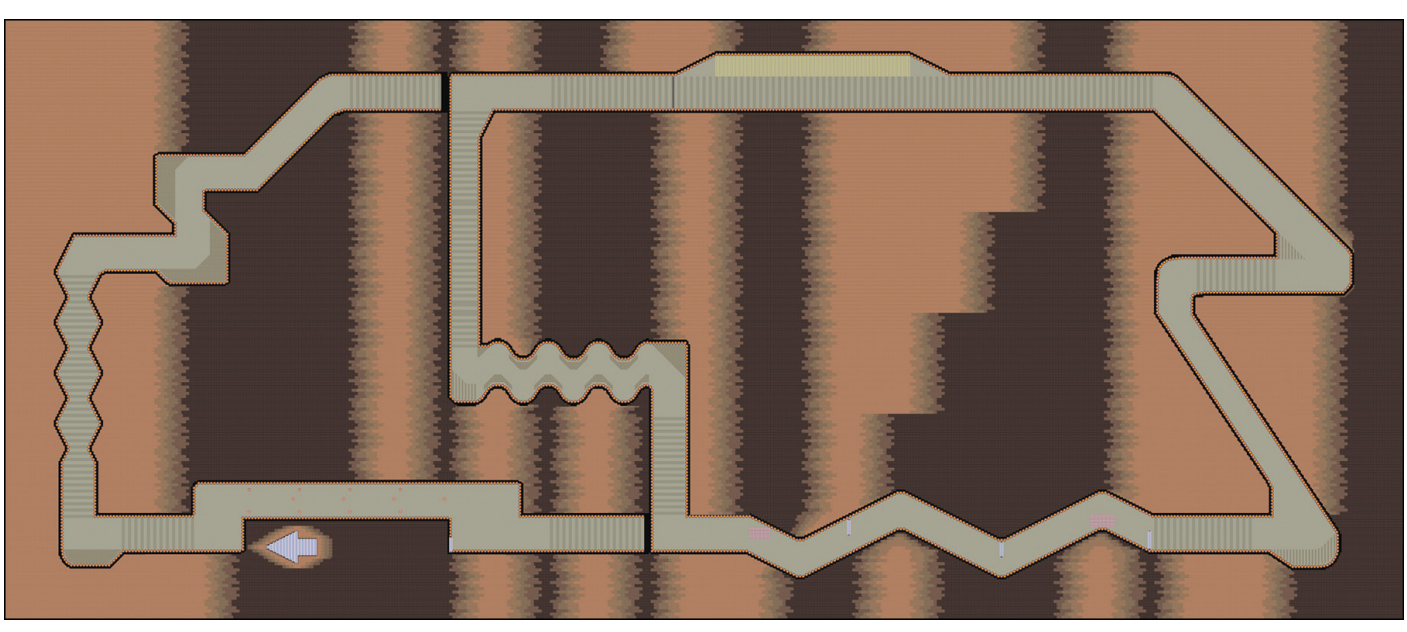
Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

F-Zero

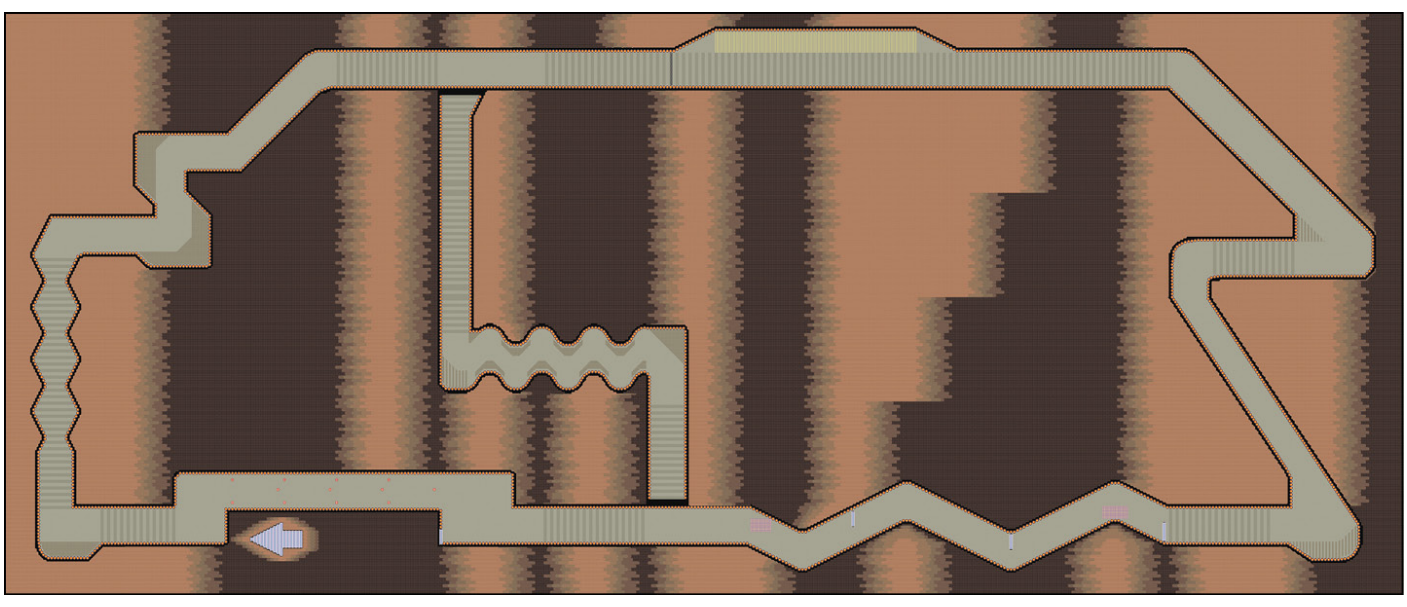
Red Canyon I/II

Home to Samurai Goroh and his gang of thieves, this planet is the site of numerous space pirate ambushes and has a reputation as the least safe *F-Zero* venue. Some say the hot dogs sold here aren't even real beef.

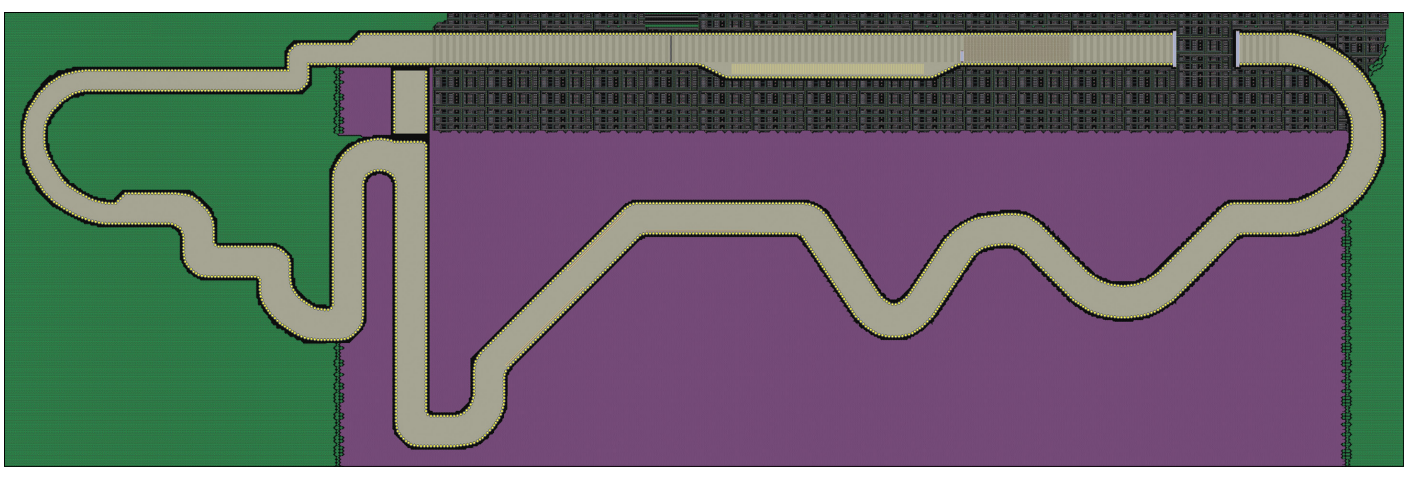




Red Canyon I



Red Canyon II



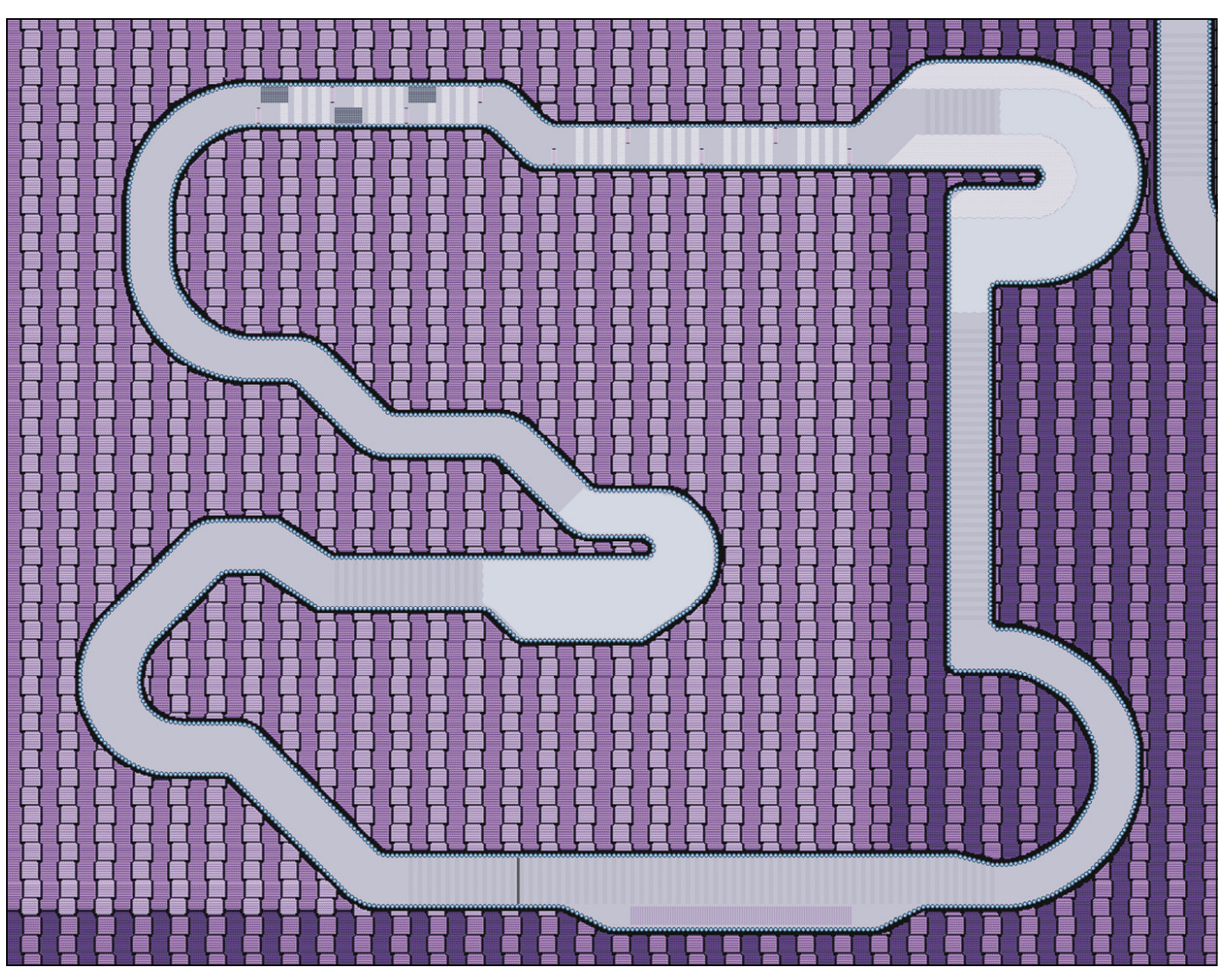
Port Town II

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

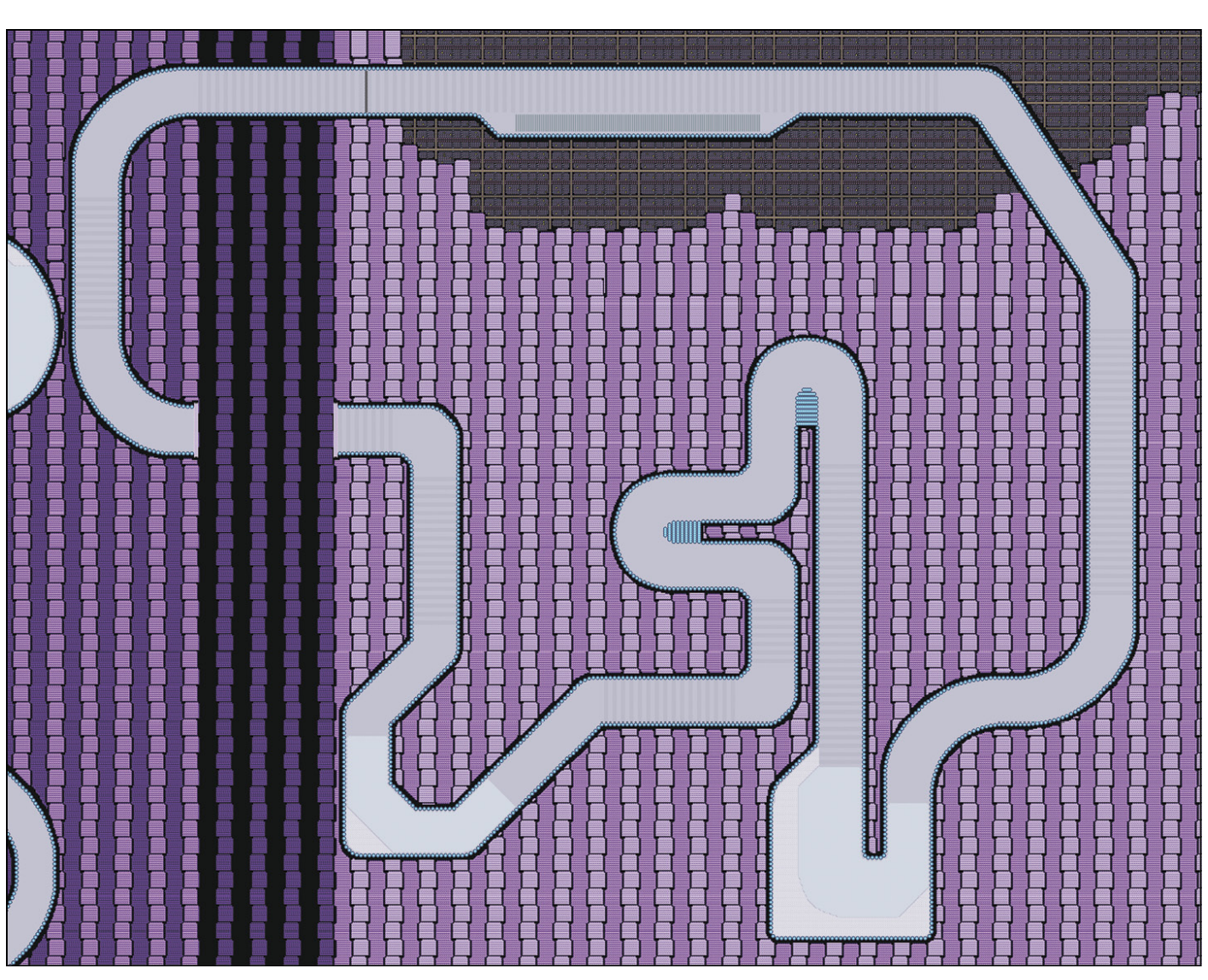
F-Zero

White Land I/II

Covered in crystals and known as the most romantic place in the Universe, White Land offers another remarkably scenic backdrop. White Land II closes out the Queen League, while also throwing some tricky forced-damage sections. You'd have to be a pretty bad racer to die to these, though. *explodes*



White Land I



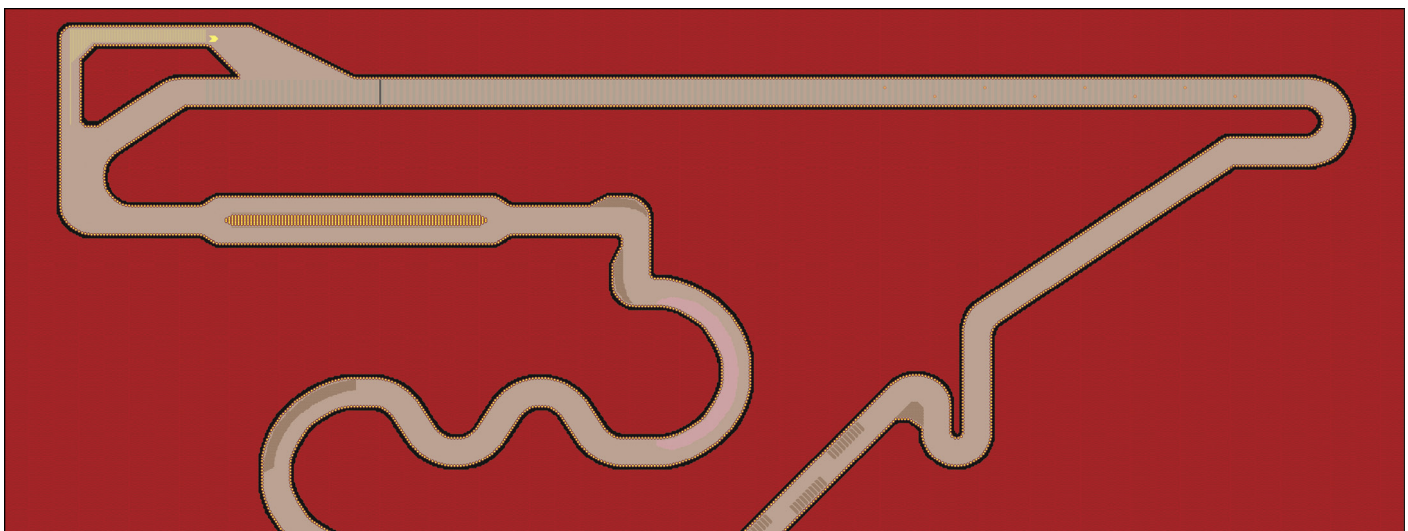
White Land II

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

F-Zero

Fire Field

Before *Dark Souls* there was Fire Field. You know what? We don't even want to talk about it right now...



Fire Field

23

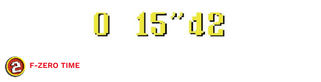
24

25

WITH THIS LINE-UP, IT'S GOING TO BE SOME RACE!
HEY, FALCON--! WHY DON'T YOU STICK TO MAKING YOUR MONEY WITH YOUR GUN...
...AND LEAVE RACING TO MASTERS OF THE ART... LIKE MYSELF.
AHH! SOON THE TRACK WILL BE LITTERED WITH THE SMOKING HULKS OF MY OPPONENTS' WRECKED AND BURNING MACHINES. THE THOUGHT ITSELF IS ECSTASY! I CAN'T WAIT!
YOU GUYS BETTER BUCKLE YOUR CHINSTRAPS.
THIS IS WHERE THE FUN STARTS...
DRIVERS--! TO YOUR MACHINES! LET F-ZERO BEGIN! TEN... NINE... EIGHT...
WOOOOO

1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

The manga-style artwork and inclusion of more pilots and their floating heads suggests the game's plot was a worthwhile selling point on the Super Famicom.



2 F-ZERO TIME

You know your friend who always says they're already on their way and then shows up three days later? *F-Zero* would probably be that person. In *F-Zero*, the in-game timer runs slightly slower than real time, with one real-world second equaling approximately 1.5 *F-Zero* seconds. Next time you're playing, run a stopwatch and see for yourself!

3 F-ZERO RPG

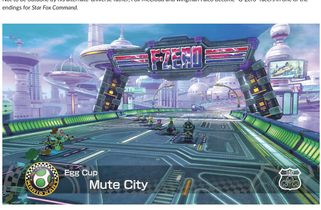
Models of both Captain Falcon's Blue Falcon machine and Samurai Goroh's Fire Stingray can be found sitting next to a model Arwing from *Star Fox* when visiting Hinopio's shop in *Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars*.

4 MCCLOUD. JAMES MCCLOUD.

Speaking of Star Fox, a very human James McCloud appears as a racer in *F-Zero* titles such as *F-Zero X* and *F-Zero GX*. His machine name is Little Wyvern and appears to be a converted Arwing.

5 LIKE FATHER...

Not to be outdone by his alternate-universe father, Fox McCloud and wingman Falco become "G-Zero" racers in one of the endings for *Star Fox Command*.



6 MARIO KART 8

Twenty-five years after its inception, *F-Zero* would guest-star in the franchise it helped give birth to, *Mario Kart*. In *Mario Kart 8*, DLC tracks include reimagined Mute City and Big Blue, along with a Blue Falcon kart and a Captain Falcon-themed outfit for the Mii racer, obtained by using the Captain Falcon amiibo.

7 FALCON PUNCH!

Though he's a legendary racer, Captain Falcon is perhaps even more renowned for his brawling skills. As a popular combatant in the *Super Smash Bros.* series, his namesake Falcon Punch move is one of the most powerful attacks in the game, often being used to KO opponents in spectacular fashion.

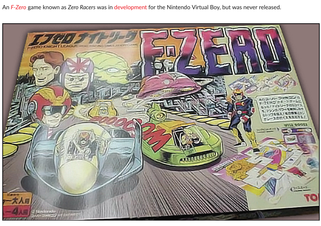
The move became so popular that it was worked into *F-Zero* canon as part of the anime. Timed with a massive explosion visible outside of the galaxy, the Falcon Punch—and Captain Falcon with it—have achieved Chuck Norris-level recognition.

8 JAZZ ALBUM

F-Zero received an official jazz album, released in Japan in March 1992. The album features twelve songs from the game composed by Yumiko Kanki and Naoto Ishida, and arranged by Robert Hill and Michiko Hill.

9 ZERO RACERS

An *F-Zero* game known as *Zero Racers* was in development for the Nintendo Virtual Boy, but was never released.



10 RACE SET

F-Zero Knight League: Real Racing Simulation is an extremely rare Japanese board game based on *F-Zero*.

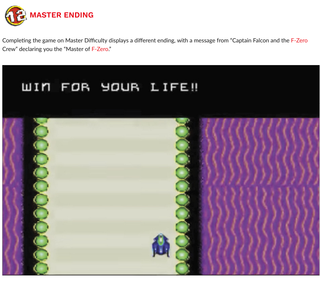
11 GP LEGEND

F-Zero GP Legend was an animated reboot of *F-Zero*, taking place in 2201 instead of 2506. The 51-episode series followed Rick Wheeler, revived 150 years after his apparent death to take down the villainous Black Shadow.

A notable revelation is that Captain Falcon is not a single man, but rather a title belonging to those worthy, like Thor.

12 MASTER ENDING

Completing the game on Master Difficulty displays a different ending, with a message from "Captain Falcon and the *F-Zero* Crew" declaring you the "Master of *F-Zero*."



13 JAPANESE MASTER ENDING

The Master Difficulty ending on the Super Famicom version of *F-Zero* gives a slightly different message, congratulating you and suggesting that next time you "Win for your life!"

14 ROUGH COUPLE OF YEARS

In *F-Zero*, Pico is said to be 34 years old. In *F-Zero X*, Pico is said to be 124, though Captain Falcon has only aged from "early 30s" to 36. This could be explained by the title of Captain Falcon being passed down throughout the years, except that Samurai Goroh and Dr. Stewart also appear in *F-Zero X* without having aged 90 years.

15 F-ZERO CONTROLLER

Shigeru Miyamoto has stated that the franchise had exhausted its potential and would likely only receive a sequel if a special controller was made for whatever he had in mind next.

16 SOUNDTRACK

In some states, it's (probably) illegal to listen to the *F-Zero* soundtrack while driving.

Speedrunner Yazzo and Speedrunner WMJ

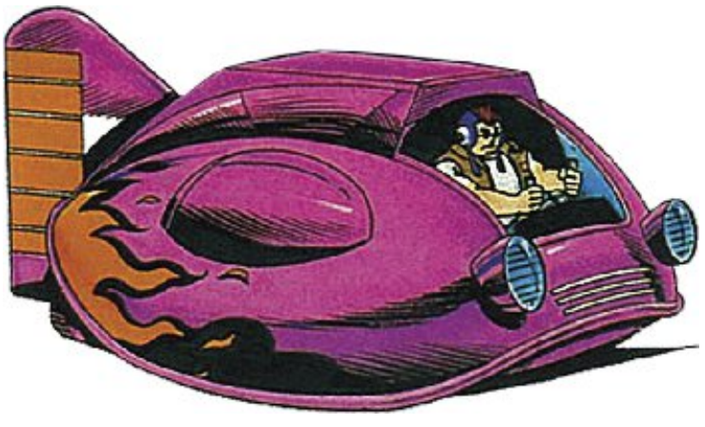
Origin: F-Zero Central

Yazzo and WMJ currently staff the *F-Zero* fansite, *F-Zero Central*. While the story behind the site and their contributions to it can be found in the Super Fans chapter of this book, Yazzo's and WMJ's decades of engrossment with the series have provided the pair with a comprehensive knowledge of the games. That extends to the mechanics used for speedrunning, which they have detailed here.

Basic

The Right Ship

The first thing you have to know about this game is that the Fire Stingray (piloted by Samurai Goroh) is your only option when going for fast times. It has the best grip, best boost, and highest top speed of the four available vehicles. The three other ships don't even come close to Fire Stingray's performance. The only downside to the Fire Stingray is the slow acceleration, so you'll have to get it at its 478 km/h max speed as quickly as possible and make it stay there.



Blast-Turning

Once you've got a feel for Fire Stingray, the next thing to learn is blast-turning. This is the most important technique in the game. Blast-turning simply means tapping the accelerator very quickly while steering through a corner. Without it, Fire Stingray has a bad tendency to understeer and continue going straight, certainly at top speed. Use blast-turning constantly; it's the best way to get around the track and speed through those corners like a pro while avoiding hitting the rails.

Leaning

Using the shoulder buttons makes your ship lean over and enables it to get through much sharper corners. Unlike later *F-Zero* games, drift-turning (steering into a corner while holding the opposite shoulder button) isn't possible, so you'll have to make do with a combination of leaning and blast-turning to get through the corners. Try to limit leaning as much as you can though, as it slightly decreases your speed when used in a turn.

Advanced

Start-Bumps

The opening lap is the most important of all. Lots of time can be gained (or lost) by overcoming Fire Stingray's slow acceleration and getting to the 478 km/h top speed as soon as possible. At the start, hold down the accelerator as soon as the countdown for the race begins to make a small boost forward. Take advantage of the small lead and maneuver in front of the other vehicles to get a start-bump in the back of your ship and win valuable time. In Grand Prix Mode, first steer in front of the Blue Falcon and have it hit you on your left back side. If you do it correctly, Fire Stingray is pushed forward again. Now steer in front of the Wild Goose to get a second bump. Again, have it hit you on the left back side for the best speed gain.

In Practice Mode, choose the Golden Fox as your rival and have it bump you twice. Depending on where it hits you the first time, it catches up more quickly to give you a second bump. Just experiment to see what gives the best result on each particular track. The difference between a normal and a double-bump opener can be more than two seconds! Also make sure to play in the Master Difficulty of the game to get even faster bumps from the CPUs.

Boosting

Use your boost (called the S-Jet in the game) just after the slowest point of the track, or use it to travel over dirt patches or other speed-eating obstacles. When going for a lap record, stock up on S-Jets until the last lap. Boost just in front of the starting line of the final lap because you can only carry three S-Jets at the same time.

Braking

These have little use, as blast-turning is a far more efficient way to get through the corners. However, there are a few tracks where you have to use braking when boosting through a twisty section to avoid an unfriendly collision with the rails. An example of this includes Sand Ocean, where you want to use your brake for a brief moment shortly after releasing your S-Jet, which allows you to stick closer to the upcoming hard right corner of the track.

Jump-Plates

These are pretty handy in the opening lap as they give a quick 40 km/h boost. Avoid them when you're using your S-Jet as they seem to bring your speed back down to 478 km/h. Always hold Down on the D-pad when landing or you'll lose lots of speed! Holding down also allows you to fly farther in air, which is especially useful when attempting shortcuts. You can hold Up on the D-pad as well while airborne to quickly descend to the ground, which is also useful for certain shortcuts.

Dash-Plates

The dash-plates give you a huge boost in speed that puts your speedometer over 900 km/h. If you drive over them, make sure to not activate your S-Jet as you won't be able to take advantage of it until you get back to normal speed again. You should also avoid using your shoulder buttons while driving over them, as that immediately has you lose control of your ship. However, sometimes it is good to use them to

quickly avoid the traffic in front of you.

Rail-Cutting

Sticking close to the inside rails and hugging the corners is always important. If you swerve wide you lose quite a lot of time when you add the five laps together. While your S-Jet is active you can gain a few hundredths by taking the corners extra sharp and cutting through the rails—but watch out that you don't cut too much or you'll bounce back.

Finishing Second

This is a strategy only viable for speedruns of the game and not individual track attempts. Before each finish line, slow down in speed and let the first CPU opponent pass you. Try to finish as closely behind him as possible. This allows you to shorten the credit screen after each track, which at best makes you save a few hundredths of a second for each time you do it. If you manage to do it well on each track in the game, however (except Fire Field since the timer ends once you cross that finish line), you could save up to a couple of seconds throughout the whole run.

Traffic

Since there are only seven tracks available in Practice Mode, you have no choice but to go for the other individual track records in Grand Prix Mode where you have to endure handling the Traffic of the game. Those include the brown, somewhat anonymous-looking ships, as well as the blinking pink ships—which occasionally also blow up in front of you, so watch out for that! They're very slow, and have a tendency to often be in your way at the worst possible time. They are random in their nature; however, it's still a legitimate skill to stay away from the traffic, so always try to keep an eye on them and avoid a collision as bumping into the back of one ruins your speed and your time.

Expert

Brake-Tapping

Brake-tapping is about keeping your average speed higher than normal when using an S-Jet. When an S-Jet is activated, your speed is boosted to 562 km/h and then it slowly decelerates to 478 km/h. When your speed reaches 478 km/h, it immediately (within the next frame) spikes back to 562 km/h, and then slowly decelerates to 478 km/h again. This cycle repeats until the S-Jet burns out. When you brake-tap, you are speeding up the rate of deceleration from the 52x-478 km/h part of the S-Jet cycle. When done correctly, brake-tapping means you spend more time going 52x-562 km/h, and less time going slow. This technique only saves about 0"01-0"02 per S-Jet and thus makes it one of the last techniques an *F-Zero* pilot should learn when trying to squeeze every last drop of time from their personal bests. To perform this technique, you want to brake when your speed hits about 520-523 km/h, and when you do this, it brings your speed back up to 55x-562 km/h. Six brake-taps per S-Jet should be done. Now normally your speed starts at 562 km/h when the S-Jet is activated and it takes about 13-15 frames before the first brake-tap can be executed. But if your speed happens to be in the 520-529 km/h range when you activate your S-Jet, it is possible to do seven brake-taps per S-Jet.

Rail-Bouncing

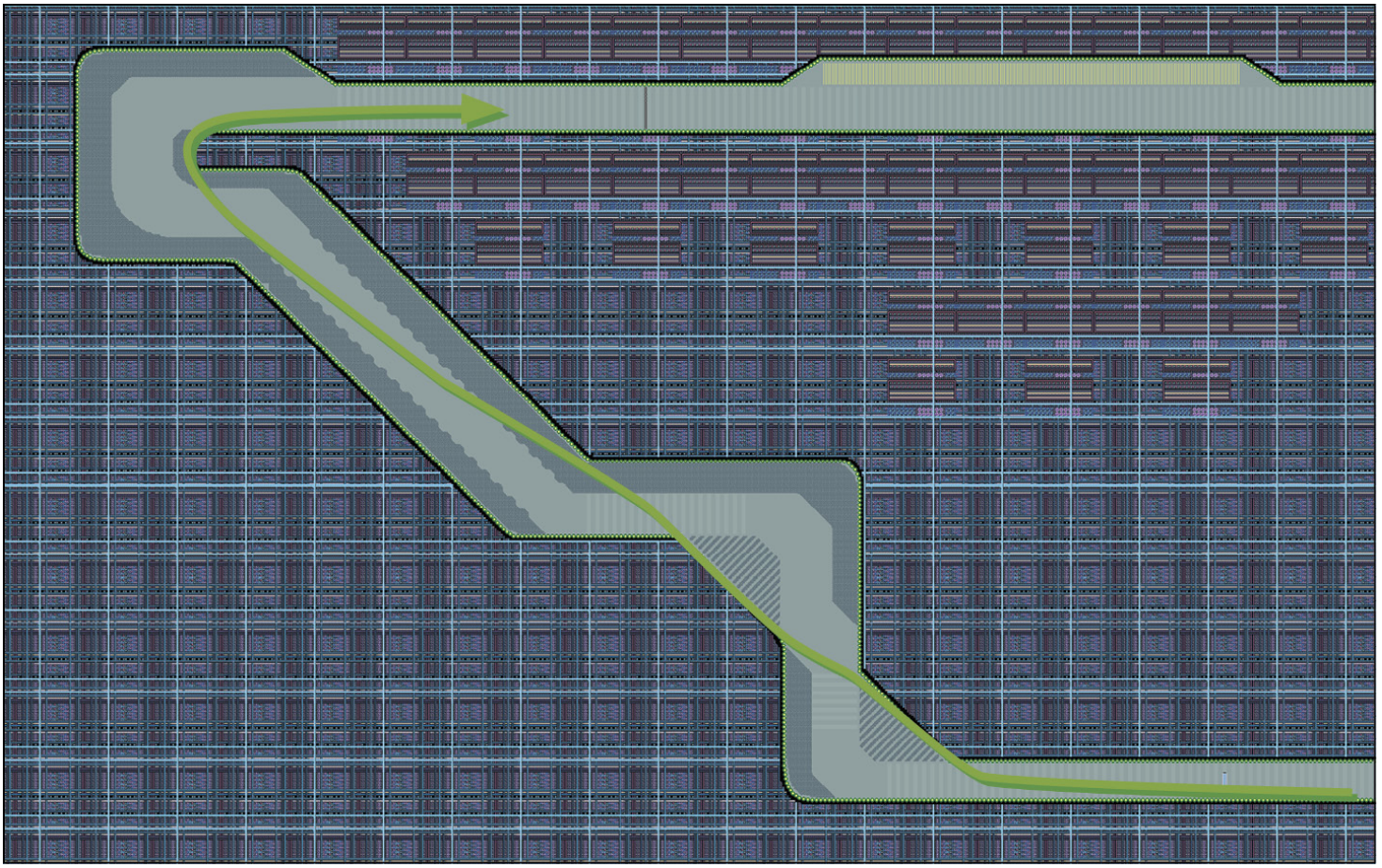
Rail-bouncing is more of an expert-technique when blast-turning + Leaning just aren't enough. The rails in *F-Zero* have a "bouncy" quality, and on some tracks this can be used to your advantage. Crash into the rail at full speed when the corner is just too tight to clear normally and you'll bounce right back at the same angle. You lose less speed this way when compared to braking and trying to avoid the rails. A good example where doing this technique is essential to setting fast times would be

Death Wind II where it can be taken advantage of multiple times on each lap.

Super Shortcuts

Most shortcuts in the game involve just activating your S-Jet while driving through dirt patches or rails, but there are also a few other very difficult "super shortcuts" that only an expert at the game should attempt.

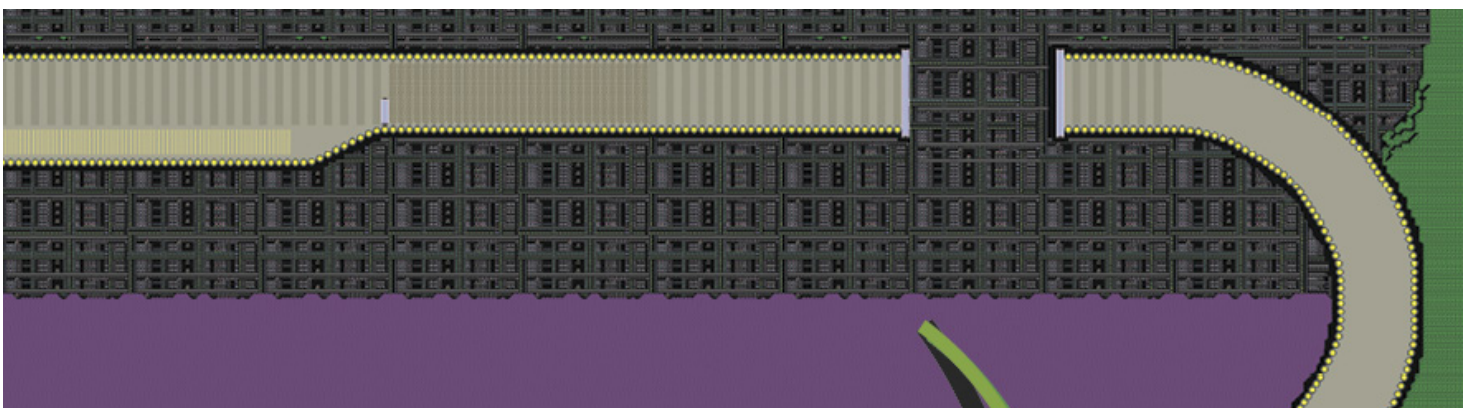
The first one you encounter is on Mute City I where it's possible to cut the dirt patches in the middle of the track on the inside and without activating your S-Jet, which allows you to keep your normal driving speed at 478 km/h as you go through it. This also means you can save your S-Jet and instead use it after the shortcut.

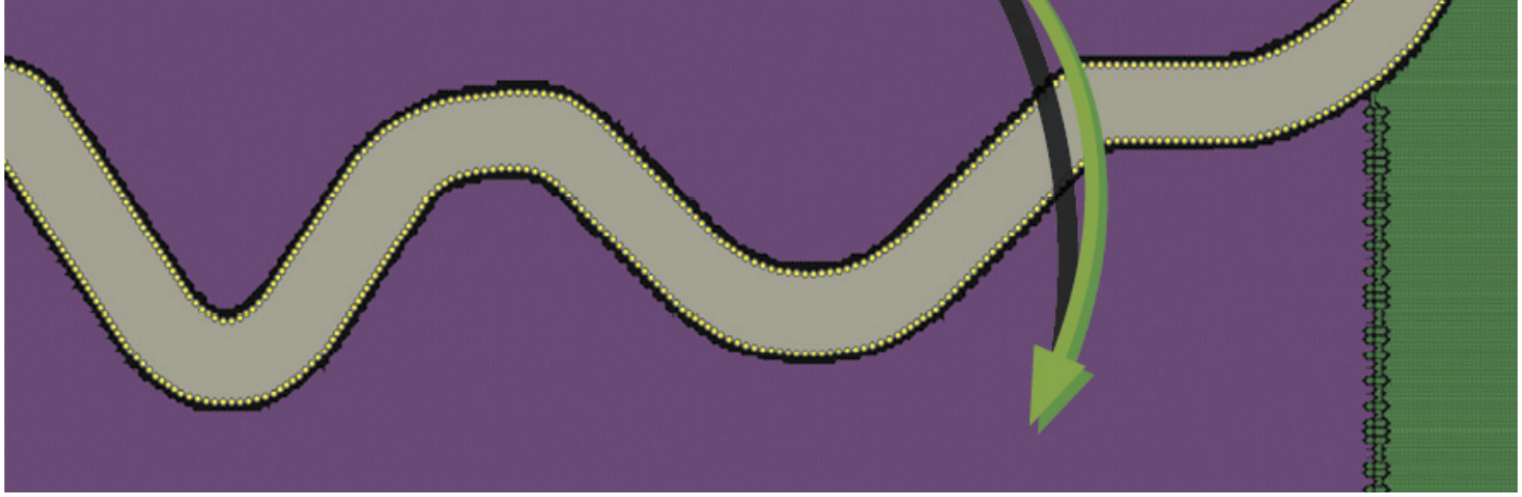


Mute City I

As you approach the jump-plate in the middle of the track, make sure you pass it on the left side and as close to it as possible without driving over it. Once you've passed it, wait for about two seconds and then quickly turn to the right while blast-turning at the same time. Try to aim for the small road gap between the dirt patch and the rails. If done correctly, you keep your 478 km/h speed as you cut the dirt patch. The next step is then to use your left shoulder button to quickly drift to the left and once again aim for the gap to keep your speed from dropping down. Once you exit the last gap, activate your S-Jet and drive over the dirt patch in front of you. The S-Jet should then last you long enough so that you can also drive over the small dirt patch at the final corner of the track. Try to aim for the rails here as you turn to the right; it makes it a bit easier getting through the turn while driving at full speed. If you can do it perfectly, this strategy saves around one tenth of a second compared to the normal strategy. Doing this strategy is extremely difficult as it requires an insane amount of precision, which is why it's so impressive that the current world record on the track (1'57"96 by Legend) manages to pull it off on each lap. This strategy can also be attempted on Mute City III since it is nearly identical in its level design.

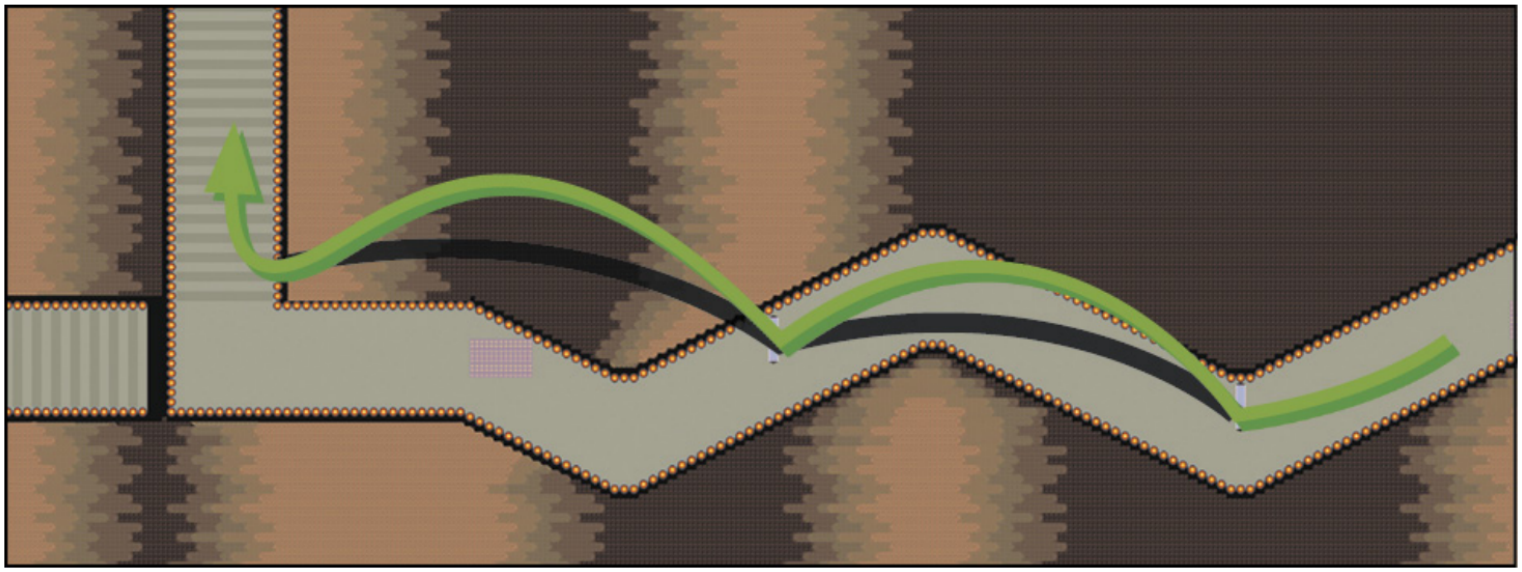
Another shortcut is the one on Port Town I (and also on Port Town II since the tracks share a lot of similarities). Here it's possible to make a huge shortcut at the start of the track (excluding the opener).





Port Town I/II

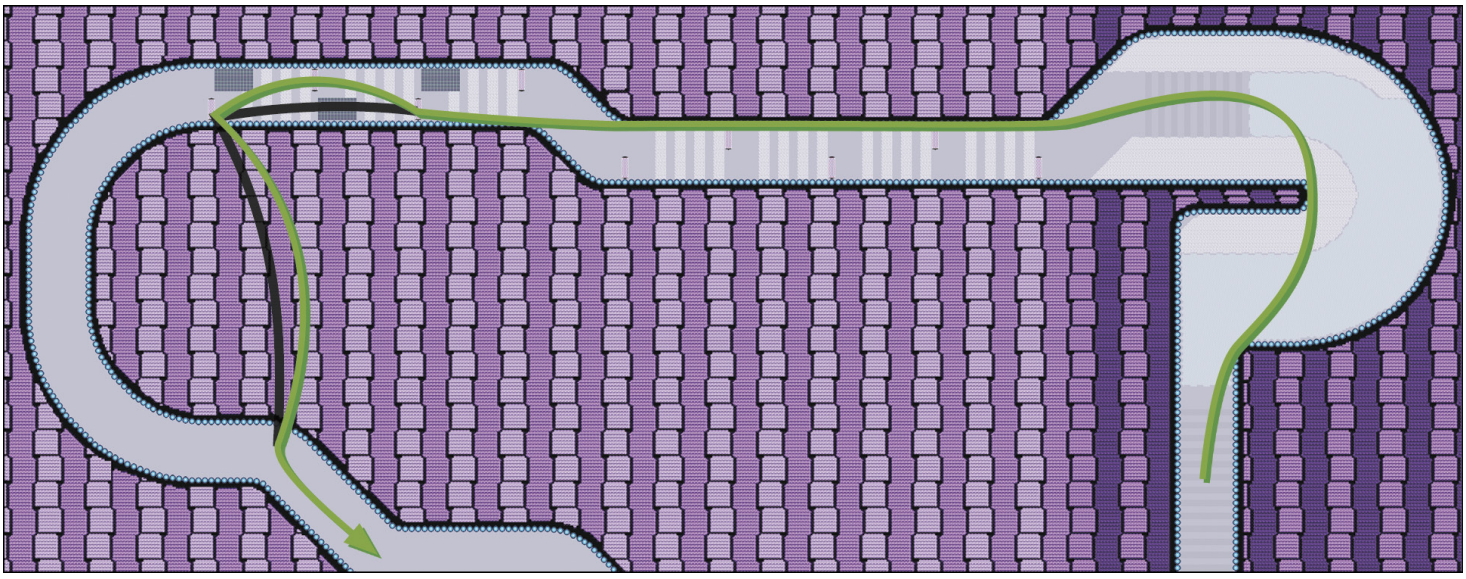
If you swerve hard to the right at the jump-plate in the beginning and hold Down on the D-pad, you can cross over to the other side of the track, as long as you have enough speed for it. If you manage to land on the other side, a machine picks up your ship and puts you down facing the correct direction. Then, make sure to activate your S-Jet just before the machine drops you down while holding Right on the D-pad; otherwise you start driving again with a lower amount of speed, or you hit the rails in front of you. This shortcut should save you about 1.2 seconds per lap.



Red Canyon I

On Red Canyon I there are three big jump-plates located in the middle of the track where a shortcut is possible to perform. First, you have to make sure you take the second jump-plate and land directly on the

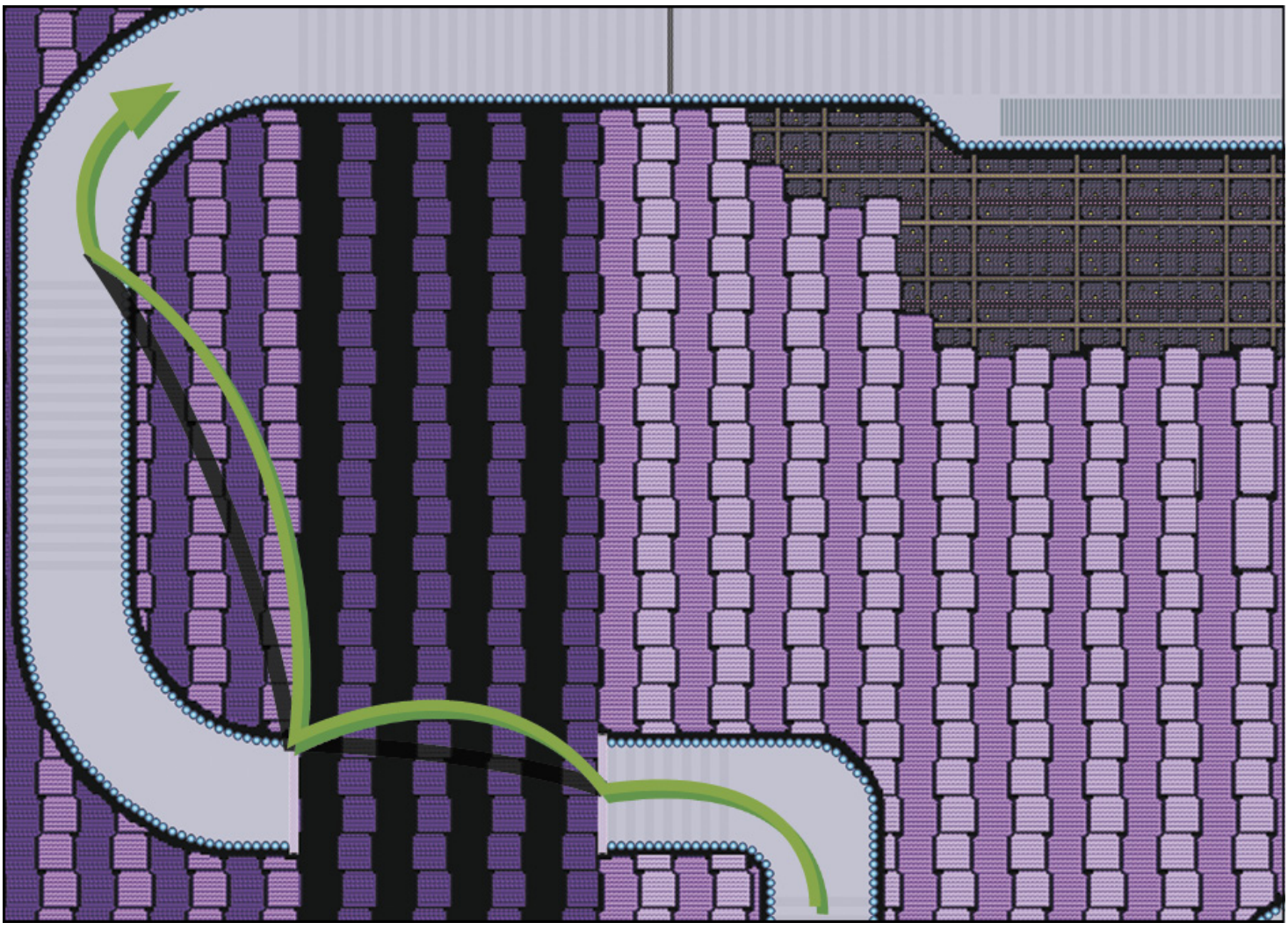
final jump-plate. This takes a bit of timing to get down at first, so don't be discouraged if you can't do it your first try. Make sure to hold Down on the D-pad immediately after you hit the last jump-plate, and also hold down the right shoulder button. Right before landing back on the track, swerve hard to the right to make sure you have the correct trajectory going into the next turn. If done right, this allows you to cut a small section of the track, and save a few tenths per lap.



White Land I

Next up is the shortcut on White Land I, which is also located around the middle of the track. At the U-turn there, swerve hard to the left and cut off the dirt patch. Right after you've done that, activate your S-Jet to get back up to speed, and drive through the rails on the right side of the track. This allows you to drive past the jump-plates to the left of you without them interrupting your speed. After you've done that, the next step is to slightly adjust your angle to the right and take the upcoming jump-plate in front of you. As you approach the next jump-plate in the air, swerve hard to the left

and now press Down on the D-pad as you hit the jump-plate. If done correctly, you should be able to cut off a big chunk of the track and save about half a second per lap. But be careful; if you swerve too much to the left, the game does not allow you to land back on the track, and a machine picks you up and places you farther back instead.



White Land II

The last super shortcut in the game is the one on White Land II, which is located right at the end of each lap. As you approach the last corners of the track, there's a wide jump-plate located there. On the opposite side of the jump-plate, another wide

jump-plate is also situated. To perform this shortcut, start holding Up on the D-pad just before hitting the first jump-plate to make sure you won't overshoot the jump-plate on the other side. While in mid-air, switch to pressing Down on the D-pad instead, and at the same time start turning to the right to have your machine pointed in a direction that allows you to shortcut the track. Then, try to aim for the right corner of the jump-plate. If you hit the jump-plate and have the correct angle, you should be able to cut off a small bit of the track that's ahead of you, saving you a couple of tenths per lap.

F-Zero was a breakout success on its own, but even long after its release its impact can still be felt in modern racing games. At the time, *F-Zero* inspired the creation of everything from *Daytona USA* to Psygnosis' *Wipeout* series, the latter helping to further blossom the futuristic racing subgenre. Similar games have had their ups and downs throughout the years (anti-gravity pun intended), but *F-Zero* itself has been dormant for over a decade.

BS F-Zero Grand Prix, BS F-Zero Grand Prix 2

1996/1997, Satellaview

Japan received two extensions to the original *F-Zero* via the Super Famicom's Satellaview add-on. For the first *Grand Prix* title, players could download four new pilots/machines and four new tracks during set broadcast times. A year later, the *BS F-Zero Grand Prix 2* event offered a few new tracks including Metal Fort I/II, Forest I/II/III, and Mute City IV.

F-Zero X

1998, Nintendo 64

Developed once again by Nintendo EAD, *F-Zero X* (originally titled *F-Zero 64*), ushered high-speed futuristic racing into three dimensions. The game was faster, the tracks were crazier, and the music was heavy metal...er. *F-Zero X* introduced Death Race, a mode where players must try to defeat 29 other racers by spinning or ramming into them as quickly as possible.

F-Zero X featured over two dozen pilots and machines, new and returning tracks including an appearance by *Super Mario Kart*'s Rainbow Road (yes, really!), and the X-Cup, which randomly generated new tracks with each playthrough.

In April 2000, the *F-Zero X Expansion Kit* was released in Japan as the first-ever add-on disk for the Nintendo 64 Disk Drive. It added 12 new tracks, a car editor, and a robust track editor.

F-Zero GX, F-Zero AX

2003, Nintendo GameCube / Arcade

A decade after the original game inspired the creation of *Daytona USA*, Nintendo released *F-Zero GX* for the Nintendo GameCube and its arcade counterpart, *F-Zero AX*. They were co-developed by none other than Amusement Vision, a subsidiary of Sega, led by Toshihiro Nagoshi, the designer of the original *Daytona USA*. Amusement Vision had previously collaborated with Nintendo on two *Super Monkey Ball* titles for GameCube.

F-Zero GX introduced a Story Mode with special missions and some of the most insanely wacky CG endings ever made.

F-Zero Maximum Velocity

2001, Game Boy Advance

F-Zero Maximum Velocity was a launch title for the Game Boy Advance and returned the series to non-3D roots, closely resembling the original *F-Zero*. It is the only *F-Zero* title to not feature Captain Falcon, Dr. Stewart, Pico, and Samurai Goroh. Two to four players could play the game with a link cable.

F-Zero GP Legend

2003, Game Boy Advance

Tying in to the anime of the same name, *F-Zero GP Legend* rebooted the plot of the series. Eight of the game's 30+ pilots could be used in Story Mode. Rounding out the game options were Grand Prix, Training, Link (multiplayer), and Zero Test, a series of challenges that awarded players bronze, silver, or gold medals based on their performance. This was the last *F-Zero* game released in the West.

F-Zero Climax

2004, Game Boy Advance

Another Japan-only release and the final *F-Zero* game to date, the fittingly named *F-Zero Climax* ended the series with an astonishing 50+ tracks spread across the game's various modes. The Game Boy Advance's visual capabilities were largely comparable to the Super NES's, complete with Mode 7 scaling and rotation—meaning that after more than a decade of sequels, the last *F-Zero* title was most reminiscent of the first.

F-Zero

F-Zero Credits

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi

Producer

Shigeru Miyamoto

Staff

Isshin Shimizu

Yukio Kaneoka

Yumiko Kanki

Yasunari Nishida

Naoto Ishida

Masato Kimura

Shigeki Yamashiro

Takaya Imamura

Masanao Arimoto

Naoki Mori

Star Fox 2

Overview

DEVELOPER

Nintendo EAD, Argonaut Software

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

September 29, 2017

The battle for the galaxy is over. The evil emperor Andross's plans to seize control of the once-great Lylat system have been thwarted by the army of Corneria – thanks in no small part to the brave deeds of elite fighter squadron Star Fox. Their mission accomplished, Fox McCloud and his team depart once more for the deep expanses of space, sent off by the cheers and adoration of Corneria's grateful inhabitants.

However…

Andross has survived. Consumed with desire for revenge, he plots an invasion even more terrible than the last. The people of Lylat cannot know it, but the peace they are enjoying is doomed to be short-lived. And sure enough, one fateful day, the forces of Andross attack once again.

Taken completely by surprise, the planets of the Lylat system fall one by one to Andross's advancing army. Corneria, at the hub of the galaxy, now lies exposed and within the clutches of the maniacal emperor!

"We've lost every outpost. The way things are going, we may struggle to hold Corneria…"

Musing on the grave state of affairs, General Pepper of the Cornerian army knows there is one last resort.

"Get me Star Fox! The galaxy needs their help!"

Star Fox is back. With upgraded Arwing fighters and two new members drafted from the Cornerian army, they're tougher and meaner than ever before. This time, they will put a stop to Andross…for good.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox 2
Development

Star Fox 2 is arguably the greatest long-lost treasure of the 16-bit era: a completely finished, unreleased sequel to one of the most impactful home console games of all time. Development started shortly after the original began shipping, with Nintendo EAD and Argonaut Software once again co-developing. The game used an even more powerful version of the Super FX chip, dubbed the Super FX 2.

Unlike most canceled games, *Star Fox 2* made numerous appearances in magazines such as *Nintendo Power*, as well as debuting a massively successful demo at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in January 1995. The demo was so popular that one man was famously arrested for attempting to steal a copy. A *Star Fox* tech demo for the Virtual Boy was also shown off at the same event.

Initially set for a summer 1995 release, *Star Fox 2* was notably absent from the first-ever Electronic Entertainment Expo, held in May of 1995. In its place, Nintendo's showing at E3 1995 emphasized *Donkey Kong Country 2*, Virtual Boy, and the upcoming Nintendo 64. *Nintendo Power* then positioned the *Star Fox* sequel to have an expected release date of early 1996. However, *Star Fox 64* was instead announced and *Star Fox 2* was quietly canceled, despite development being complete. In 2011, programmer Dylan Cuthbert and producer Shigeru Miyamoto explained the reasoning behind the cancellation: Nintendo felt a clean break between the 3D visuals of the current hardware—still impressive for a 16-bit system—was needed from the upcoming and more advanced 3D of the Nintendo 64.

Star Fox 2 was officially released over two decades later for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System Classic Edition.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox 2

Teaching a Young Fox New Tricks

Whereas Namco's *Starblade* had largely influenced the original *Star Fox*, Namco's *Star Luster*, released in 1985 for the Famicom, as well as Argonaut's own *Starglider* series, inspired more open-ended space combat. Not coincidentally, *Star Luster* was included in the Japanese version of *Star Fox: Assault*, which was developed by Namco in 2005. The goal of non-linear gameplay gave birth to *Star Fox 2*'s "All-Range Mode," allowing the Arwing to fly unrestricted in 360 degrees. The Arwing comes equipped with a new chargeable homing shot to balance the now more chaotic space battles, and a mini-radar provides the location of enemies in the vicinity, as they no longer fly on a scripted path into the player's line of sight.

All-Range Mode is just one of several substantial departures from the first *Star Fox*. To accompany the open-ended combat, the linear "levels" were replaced with a single map of the Lylat System. In the bottom left-hand corner is Corneria, with the Great Fox battleship from which the Star Fox team is deployed hovering in its orbit. This marked the Great Fox's first appearance, though it appears again in *Star Fox 64* and throughout the series as the mobile headquarters of the Star Fox squadron.

In addition to Corneria are the familiar planets of Fortuna, Macbeth, Titania, and Venom. Eladard, a new world never before seen and never seen again in the *Star Fox* universe, appears exclusively in *Star Fox 2*. Non-planet locations of interest include Meteor, enemy battleships, and the Cornerian Satellite Defense System. On the opposite end of the screen is Venom, and Andross' massive base. The objective of the game is to travel around the Lylat system destroying enemy bases at the key locations while intercepting enemy fighters and missiles aimed at Corneria. Enemy battleships launch more fighters over time, and planets captured by enemy forces launch Interplanetary Ballistic Missiles (IPBMs). If the Arwing comes into contact with an enemy or captured planet on the map screen, the player is immediately taken to the corresponding combat stage.

Most notably of all, the entire game is timed. When the Arwing is moving on the map screen, time advances, allowing enemy forces to converge on Corneria from their point of origin, wherever that may be. Combat also progresses time, so while Fox is trying to shoot down missiles or destroy an enemy base, any other enemies can attack the defenseless Cornerian homeworld. Each successful attack does a varying amount of damage, denoted in percentages, and if the total damage reaches 100%, Corneria falls and the game is lost.

While some missions can be completed in a matter of seconds, anything involving a base or a drawn-out dogfight with the game's trickier enemies can eat up dangerous amounts of time. Even on Expert, the difficulty per mission is not particularly unreasonable, but managing all threats at all times is where *Star Fox 2* truly tests the player.

To aid the Star Fox team on their missions, the Arwing has been outfitted with the ability to transform into a bipedal ground unit called the Walker. The Walker can only be deployed on planet surfaces and inside bases, and has complete lateral freedom. In this mode the Walker retains the Arwing's abilities to shoot and use items, and can also jump. The Walker is required to complete certain objectives where buttons need to be pressed to open entrances to or inside bases. While the easier Walker-specific objectives are as simple as running to the target and standing on it, triggering a cutscene, higher difficulties can require the Walker to push button platforms over or into position before activating them. There are also slot-machine-style triggers that must be shot until they are properly aligned, light platforming challenges, and an underwater base! It sounds simple, and by today's standards undoubtedly is, but for the second *Star Fox* title it stands out as an enterprising amount of variety.

Despite being canceled, many of *Star Fox 2*'s concepts had a resounding impact on all future releases in the series. All-Range Mode and land vehicles became a series staple from *Star Fox 64* on. *Star Fox 2*'s open-ended strategic elements and the transforming Walker reappeared in *Star Fox Command* for the Nintendo DS and *Star Fox Zero* for the Wii U, respectively. The villainous Star Wolf team also played a major role in future games after debuting in *Star Fox 2*.

DIFFICULTY

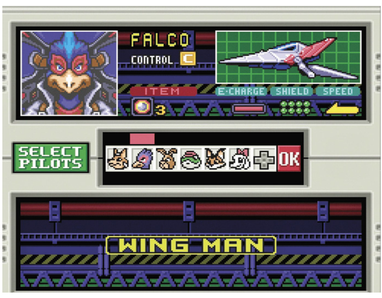
Unlike the original *Star Fox* and *Star Fox 64*, *Star Fox 2* allows the player to select their preferred difficulty before the game starts. Normal, Hard, and Expert each determine the size of Andross's forces, as well as the difficulty of each mission. Like with its predecessor, each difficulty drastically impacts what the player sees and encounters, even when visiting the same locations. On higher difficulties, the enemy onslaught comes in additional waves once the player has cleared out the initial invading force.

Star Fox 2 introduces two new wingwomen and allows the player to choose two pilots at the onset of the game. Fox is not a mandatory pick, meaning Slippy Toad and Peppy Hare can save the galaxy on their own for once, or newcomers Fay and Miyu can take on the forces of Andross.

Each pair of pilots has their own speed, charge shot, and shield rating, as well as a unique item, though this can be replaced by picking up a different item during missions.

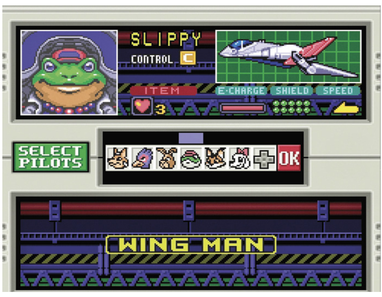
Fox McCloud

Falco Lombardi



Fox and Falco have balanced Arwings. Their special item is the Nova Bomb from the first game, which is particularly useful for one-shotting the core reactor in most enemy bases.

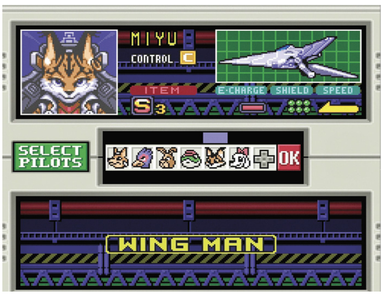
Slippy Toad



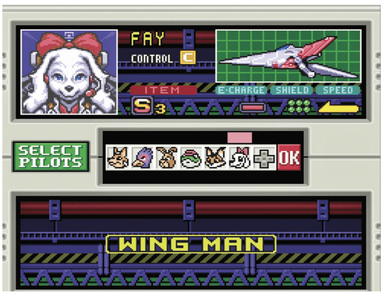
Peppy Hare

Slippy and Peppy have high shields but the longest charge shot duration, making them less ideal for dogfights with multiple enemies. Their Heart special item repairs their Arwing.

Miyu



Fay



Named after programmer Dylan Cuthbert's childhood crush, Fay is a white dog with a pink hair bow, while Miyu is a female lynx. Fay and Miyu have the weakest shields but the fastest Arwings and fire off charged shots faster than any other pilots. Their special item is a temporary shield that automatically reflects incoming enemy fire.

Unlike the vast majority of other characters and mechanics from *Star Fox 2*, Miyu and Fay are never seen or mentioned again throughout the franchise.

Corneria

Players only see Corneria during combat if they engage an enemy target in its proximity.

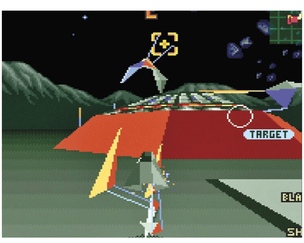
Satellite Defense System

This satellite will periodically shoot down enemy targets. However, it has a long recharge and can be taken over by certain enemies and used to attack Corneria unless the player reclaims it.

Planets captured by Andross's forces require the player to assault the surface and open the doorway to the enemy base. Once inside, the core must be destroyed to free the planet. While under enemy control, planets can fire IPBMs.

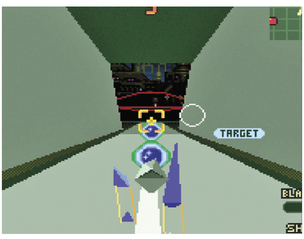
Captured planets are chosen randomly at the start of the game, and again on higher difficulties once Andross starts to get angry.

Fortuna

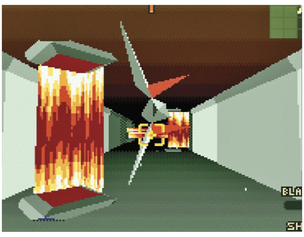


Meteor

Macbeth



Eladard



Titania

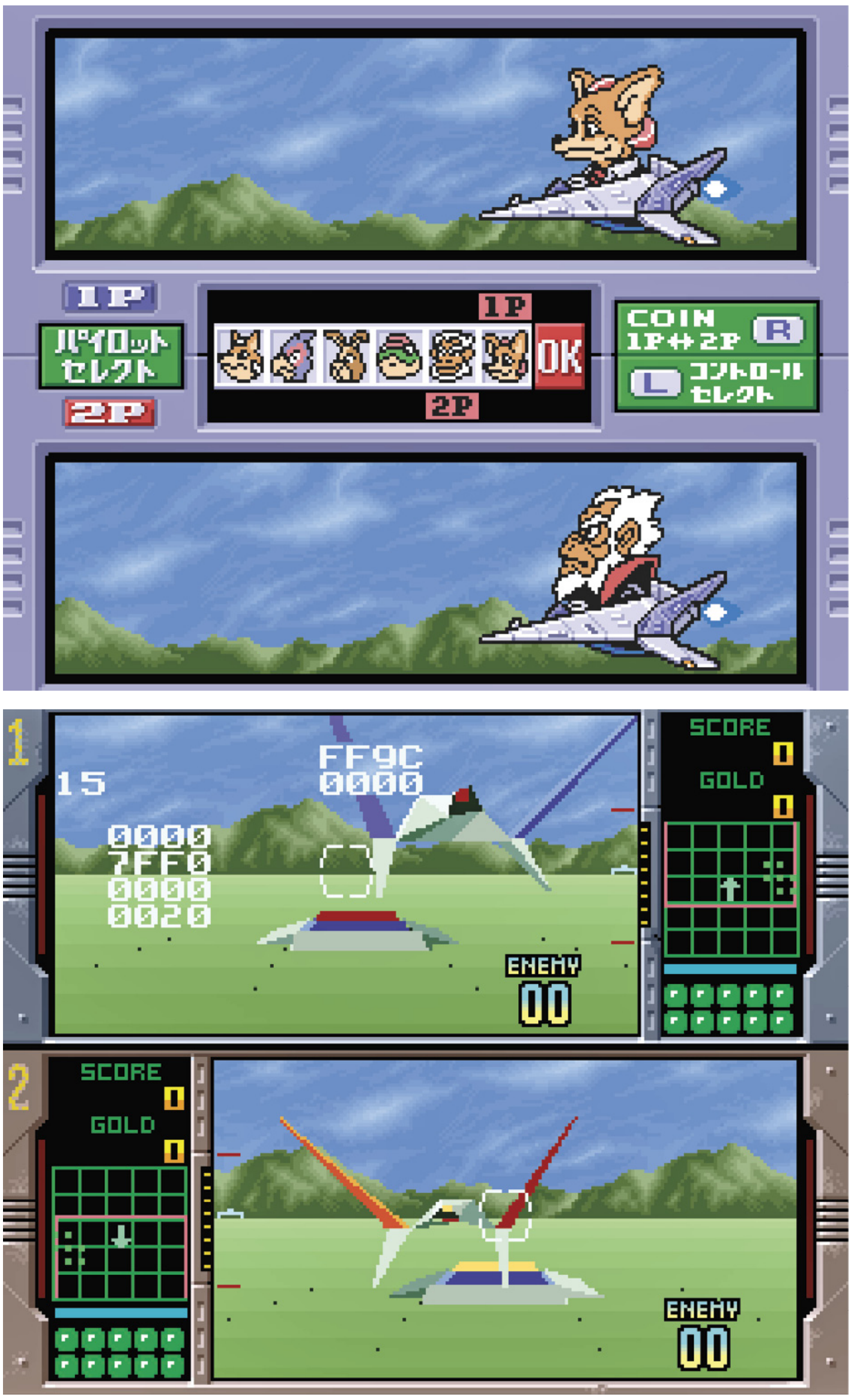
Venom

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox 2

But Wait, There Was More...

As if all of the new ideas and features of *Star Fox 2* weren't enough, there were several notable elements that changed drastically during development or didn't make the final game. *Star Fox 2* would have been the first multiplayer *Star Fox*. Early versions of the game featured a split-screen Multiplayer Mode that would pit players against each other in a one-on-one dogfight. Six pilots could be chosen from, including Andross and "Lady" in place of Miyu and Fay. Lady's design was extremely similar to Fara Phoenix from the *Star Fox* comic series featured in *Nintendo Power*.



The Arwing had some additional functionality tested but ultimately removed. Although it can boost and break infinitely in the final game with no penalty, earlier versions of the game would have the Arwing overheat and suffer damage if the boost was abused. Likewise, a hover mechanic existed but was scrapped. A hover ability for the tank did make it into the final version of *Star Fox 64*, however.

An unused neighborhood resembling a typical—albeit sparse—suburb, complete with swimming pools and paved roads, was playable in test versions of the game. And last, there was a goat character seen in an issue of *Nintendo Power* from early 1994, but its slot was eventually given to Fay.

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Star Fox 2
Enemy Gallery

Star Wolf

Star Fox 2 introduces the Star Wolf mercenary group, which has long-standing rivalries with Fox and his team. However, it's Pigma who betrayed Peppy Hare and James McCloud, Fox's father, setting in motion some of the most important events in the *Star Fox* story. Note that Algy is later replaced by a similar character named Andrew.

Wolf O'Donnell

Algy

Leon Powalski

Pigma Dengar

Andross

That scheming monkey is up to his usual tricks. After assaulting his base, players face off against another giant disembodied head with weak spots for eyeballs. Has Andross learned nothing from the *Star Wars* movies?

Star Fox 2

Star Fox 2 Credits

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi

Producer

Shigeru Miyamoto

Director

Katsuya Eguchi

Assistant Director

Yoichi Yamada

Programmers

Dylan Cuthbert

Takumi Kawagoe

Yasuhiro Kawaguchi

Assistant Programmer

Hajime Yajima

Program Assist

Argonaut Software LTD

3D System Programmers

Pete Warnes

Carl Graham

Graphic Designer

Masanao Arimoto

3D Shape Designer

Tsuyoshi Watanabe

Sound Programmer

Yoji Inagaki

Music Composers

Kozue Ishikawa

Yumiko Kanki

3D Tool Programmer

Daiki Iwamoto

English Translator

Marcus Lindblom

Special Thanks To

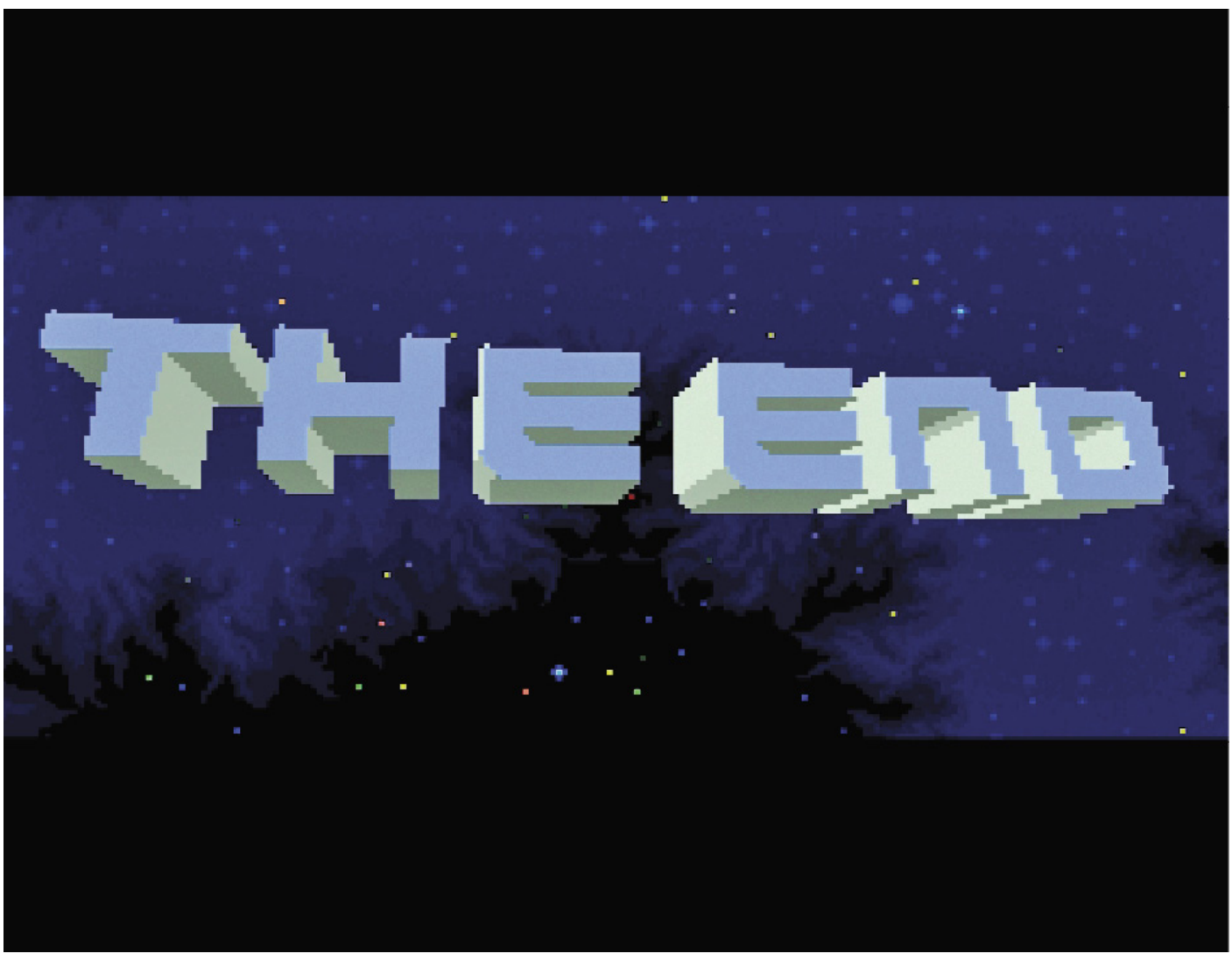
Takaya Imamura

Dan Owsen

Kayomi McDonald

Robin KrouseIsaac Marshall

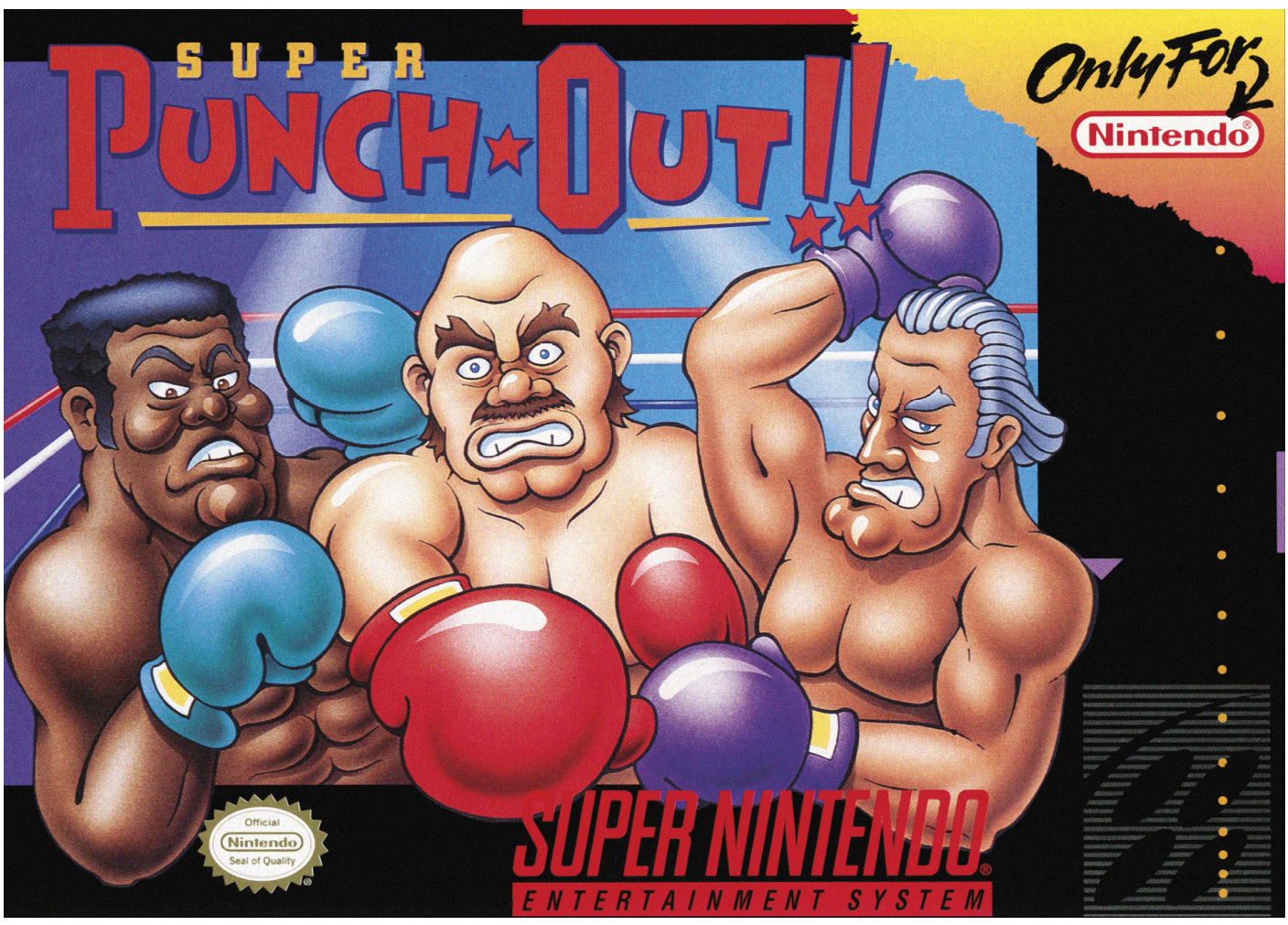
Nintendo of America



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Super Punch-Out

Overview



DEVELOPER

Nintendo IRD

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

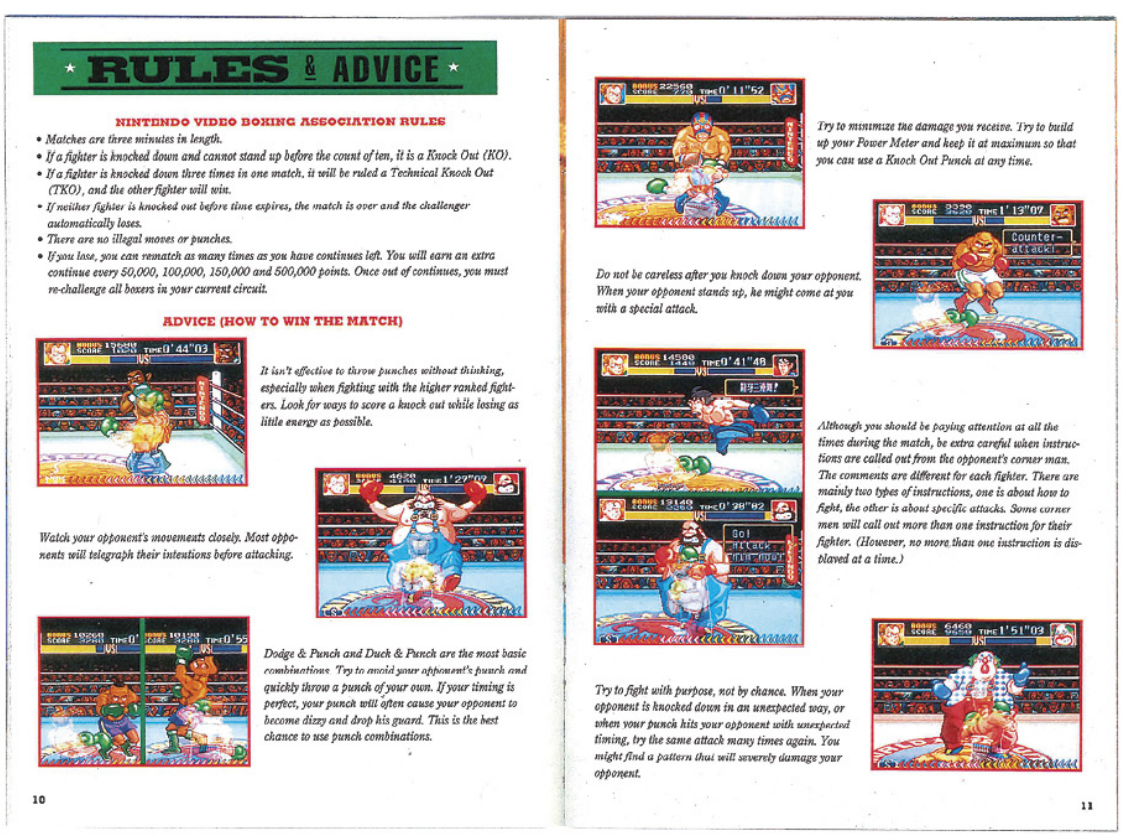
JP: March 1, 1998

NA: October 1, 1994

EU: January 26, 1995

World Video Boxing Association Rules:

- Matches are three minutes in length.
- If a fighter is knocked down and cannot stand up before the count of ten, it is a Knock Out (KO).
- If a fighter is knocked down three times in one match, it will be ruled a Technical Knock Out (TKO), and the other fighter will win.
- If neither fighter is knocked out before time expires, the match is over and the challenger automatically loses.
- There are no illegal moves or punches.
- If you lose, you can rematch as many times as you have continues left. You will earn an extra continue every 50,000, 100,000, 150,000, and 500,000 points. Once out of continues, you must re-challenge all boxers in your current circuit.



With Mario, the secret to success was making the character unique enough to be memorable, but still understated enough to not overshadow the game world. The complete opposite was true of boxers in the *Punch-Out!!* series, which offered nothing but in-your-face personalities. Without the need to render entire worlds or dozens of different enemy and item types like in other games, Nintendo IRD put the emphasis solely on making the boxers themselves larger-than-life. They *were* the world of *Punch-Out!!*

While most players likely discovered Little Mac and his motley crew of opponents on the NES, the franchise's roots lie in the arcades. Three years before *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!* hit home consoles, Nintendo released the original *Punch-Out!!* for the arcade. The game featured only six challengers and a wireframe player character, allowing arcade-goers to see both their own boxer as well as their opponent. The surprise success of the game led to an arcade sequel, *Super Punch-Out!!*, being released the following year.

Nearly a decade later, *Super Punch-Out!!* was remade for the Super NES, featuring many of the same characters from its coin-op and NES predecessors. The enhanced graphical capabilities of the 16-bit hardware allowed the series' signature caricatures to get even more attention, making them more colorful, and more punch-able.

Mac & Weave

Despite the series spanning 25 years of releases, *Punch-Out!!*'s core gameplay never changed. Whether it was on the NES, Super NES, or Wii, two and a half decades after its arcade debut the seemingly simple mechanics' deceptive depth has enabled rookie pugilists to quickly get in the ring, while allowing veterans aiming for high scores and no-damage runs to endlessly hone their technique.

The recurring player character, most commonly known as Little Mac—though he can be renamed in *Super Punch-Out!!*—has a streamlined set of moves. He can throw jabs and body blows, as well as block, duck, or dodge to the left and right. Each *Punch-Out!!* game also has a special meter or star system that allows Mac to unleash extra powerful uppercuts and hook combinations.

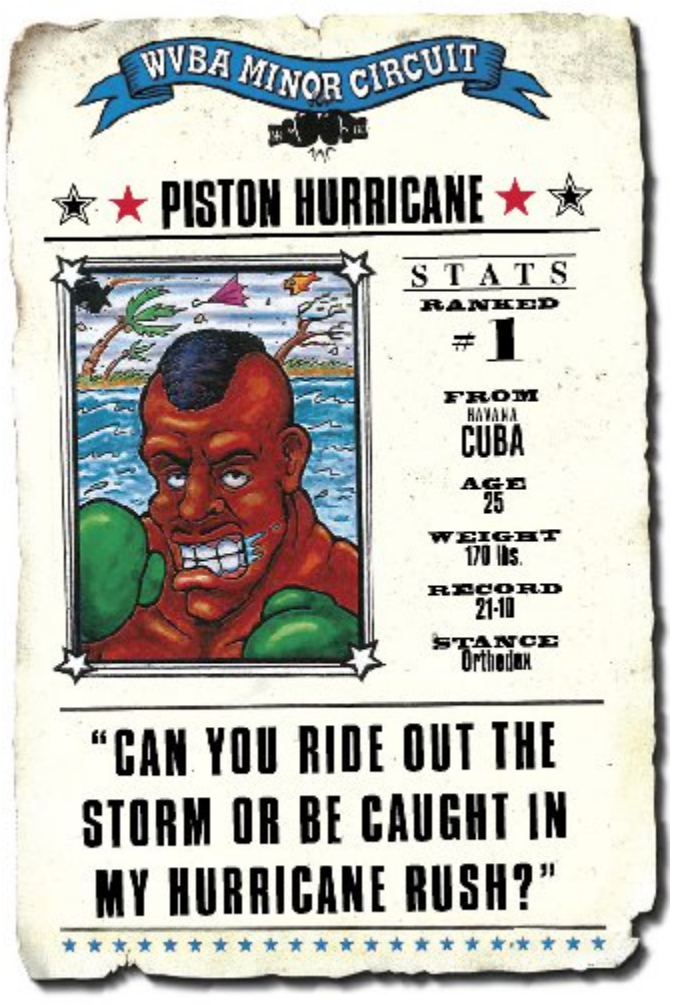
The game's depth has little to do with what the player can do, and everything to do with what the enemies are capable of. Each boxer's fighting style is as eclectic as they are. Some characters may take to the offensive but leave themselves open to easy counterattacks; others may dance around the ring or use tricks such as spitting to blind Mac, kicking, weapons, and even magic. Each boxer also has at least one signature move that either knocks Mac to the floor outright, or does critical damage. To a certain extent these tactics follow specific patterns and can be memorized, but this is not always true due to sporadic randomized sequences, keeping even the most experienced *Punch-Out!!* masters on their toes.

Knockdowns can be delivered by depleting a boxer's stamina meter, or by delivering a punch at just the right time, often as they're about to unleash the aforementioned signature attack. *Super Punch-Out!!* also features a hidden "dizzy meter" that puts boxers into a stunned state after a number of consecutive punches land. Certain characters can be dizzied faster than others. Similarly, most—but not all—boxers are guaranteed to be KO'd if knocked down within a few seconds of getting up from the mat the first time, though this requires a lot of a skill and a bit of luck.

The first, and comically weakest, opponent in the game, Gabby Jay, has lost a staggering 99 of his 100 fights. His single victory was against Glass Joe, the weakest opponent in the original *Punch-Out!!*, which earned him a diploma from the Glass Joe School of Boxing.

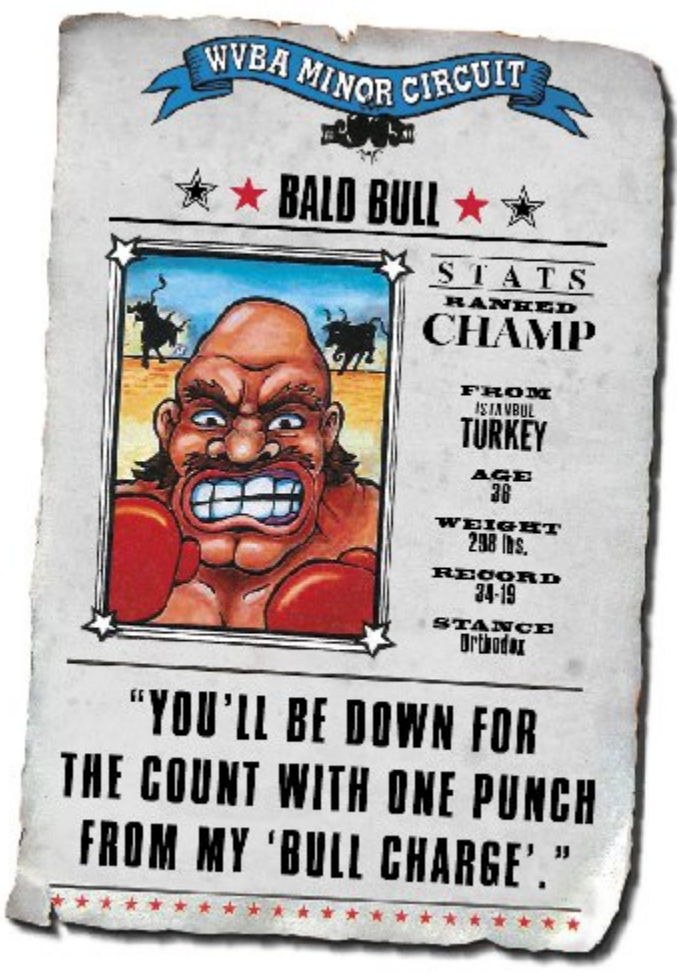
At 56 years young, Gabby Jay is the second most elderly boxer in the game, but has no intention of retiring until he's tasted victory one more time…

The Canadian Bear Hugger is a whole lotta boxer, but this just makes him an easier target. A punch to the stomach makes the squirrel-loving lumberjack stick his tongue out mockingly, while a blocked punch causes him to do a powerful double-fisted smash. Luckily, unlike the arcade version of *Super Punch-Out!!*, his signature Bear Hug move isn't an instant KO.



Piston Hurricane's signature move, Hurricane Rush, was named after the storm that destroyed his home and forced him to live on the streets. Should he be allowed to execute Hurricane Rush, he'll unleash a barrage of alternating punches, topping it off with a beastly uppercut.

Forgoing his original afro and stylin' 'stache for a military-style mohawk, Piston Hurricane is the first real challenge of the game.

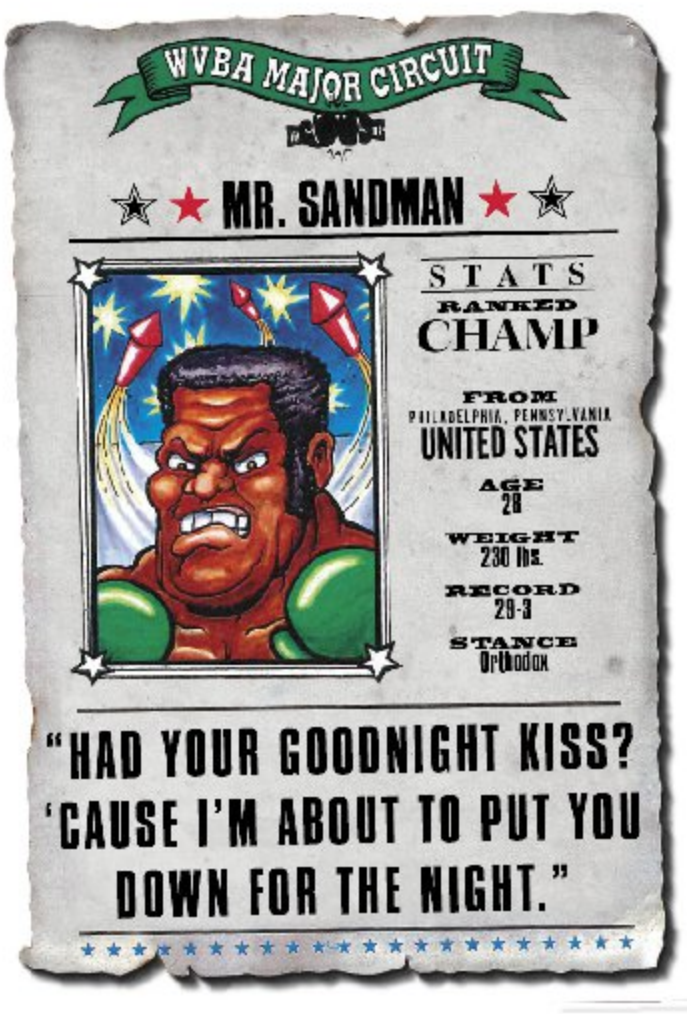


Bald Bull has become a staple of the *Punch-Out!!* franchise, with more appearances than any other boxer. Downgraded to the Minor Circuit in *Super Punch-Out!!*, Bald Bull doesn't pose as much of a threat as he does in previous titles, but he retains his patented Bull Charge move where he hops forward and then throws a single punch that flattens the player. Unlike his previous incarnation, however, he no longer spams this attack until it connects.

The Jive King of Kingston can be a particularly irritating opponent as his ability to boogie makes him a slippery target. When Bob Charlie wins by TKO, he'll use Gabby Jay's "Yay!" audio line.

Taking inspiration from both Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, Dragon Chan is the only boxer who also uses kicks. Isn't that cheating?! Nope! Not in the W.V.B.A.! Chan's signature high-flying jumpkick can KO the player if it's not ducked.

If you thought kicking was bad, former wrestler Masked Muscle not only spits in his opponents' eyes but also uses headbutts. The latter move can be countered for an instant knockdown. His treacherous antics have earned him nicknames such as "Amigo to None" and "Crown Prince of the Cheap Shot." But really...spitting? Gross, man.

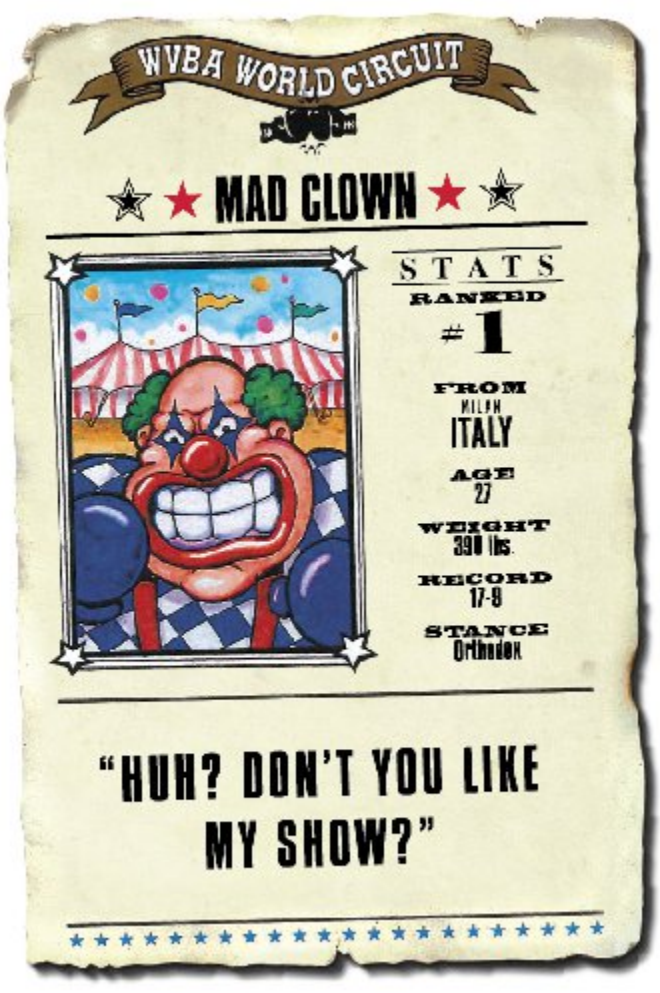


One of the most formidable combatants in the original *Punch-Out!!*, Mr. Sandman has been toned down slightly from his 8-bit days, but not much. He can still block while stunned and, after being knocked down twice, gains a rapid-fire triple uppercut move that's sure to turn his opponents' dreams... **puts on sunglasses** ...to nightmares.

Aran Ryan's official profile tells the tragic story of a young Irish boy whose mother spelled his name in an untraditional fashion. This caconymic violation resulted in relentless teasing from Aran's fellow schoolmates, and years of fighting back forged him into the ornery scrapper now ranked in the World Circuit.

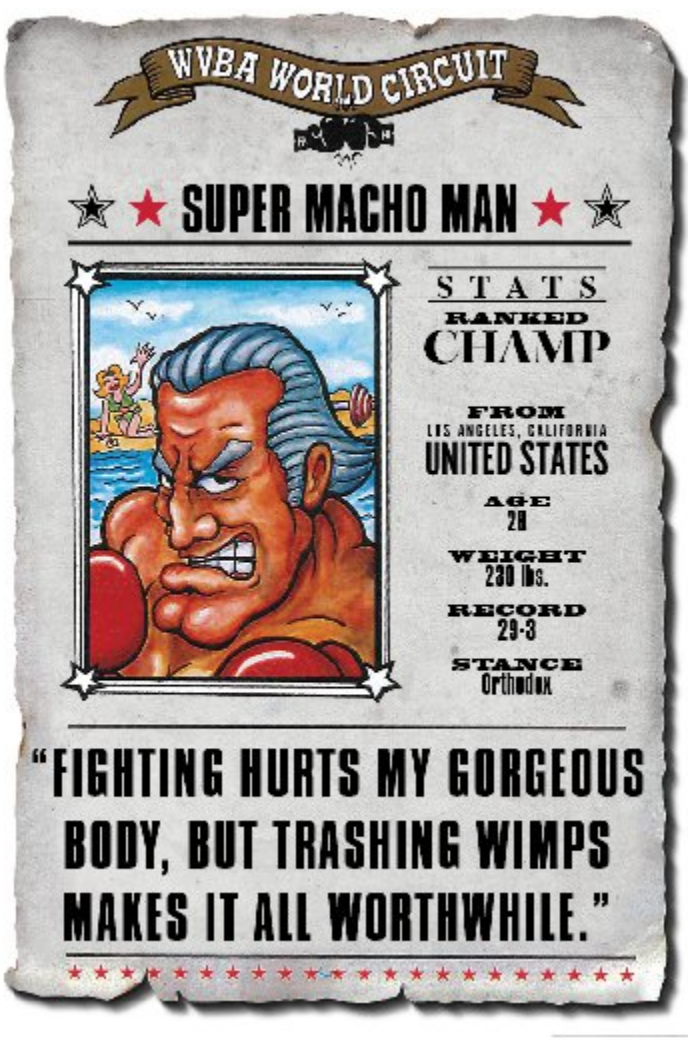
Aran borrows similarities not only from his palette swap, Piston Hurricane, but also a unique grab move from Pizza Pasta, an original *Punch-Out!!* arcade character.

Never underestimate a boxer trained in ballet! Quick on his feet and armed with weaponized hair straight out of a commercial for expensive conditioner, Kagero sports a special mirage move, a la Great Tiger from the previous game. At just 19 years old, he is also the youngest *Punch-Out!!* opponent in the series.



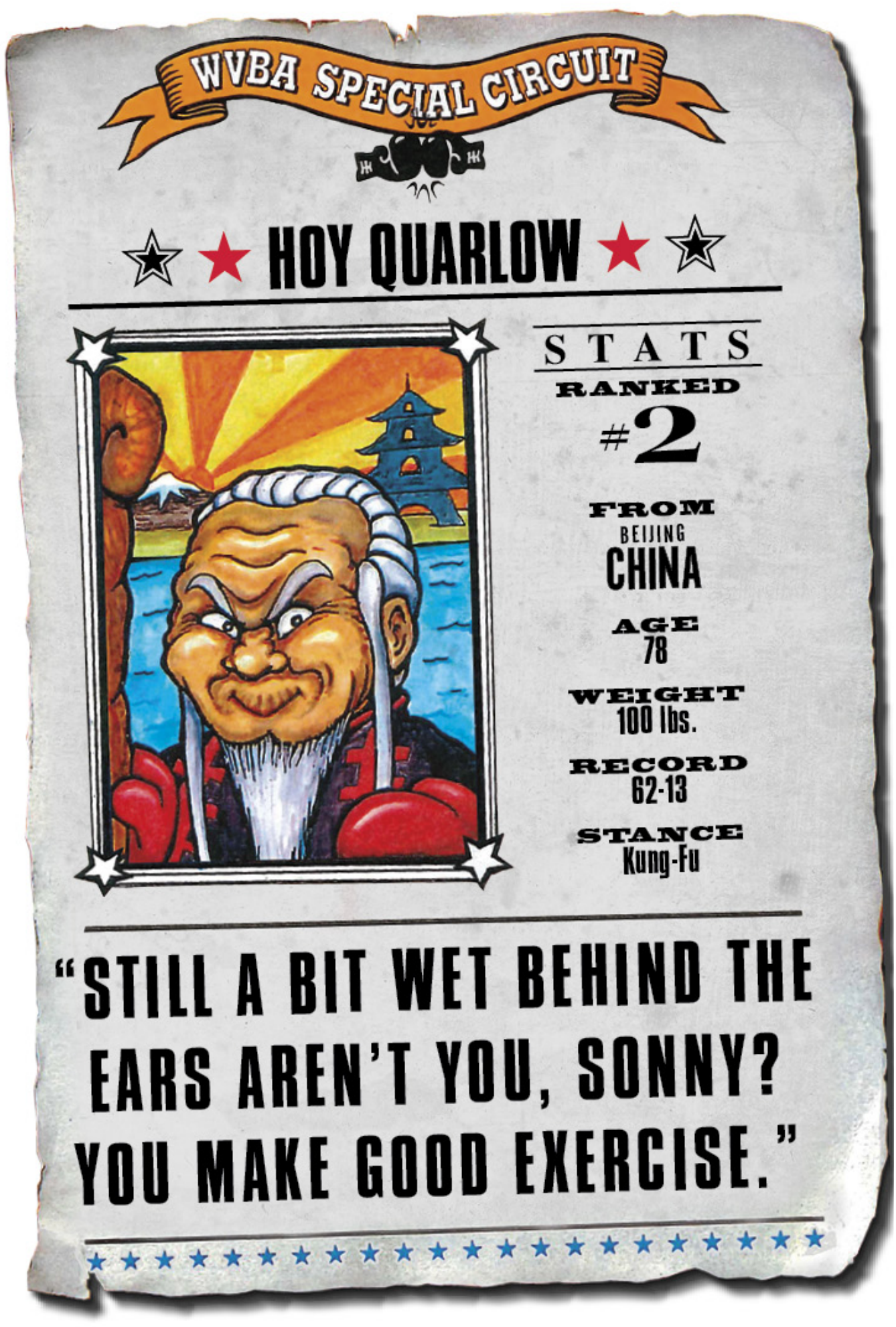
Originally an opera singer before a nervous breakdown led him to join the circus, Mad Clown grew weary of the nightly performances. Naturally, he turned to boxing. While he fights like a more dangerous version of Bear Hugger, complete with a bear hug (clown hug?) move, he must not have completely given up on juggling as he'll use his old circus act to attack the player.

After two knockdowns, Mad Clown becomes even more aggressive but no longer defends himself against incoming attacks.



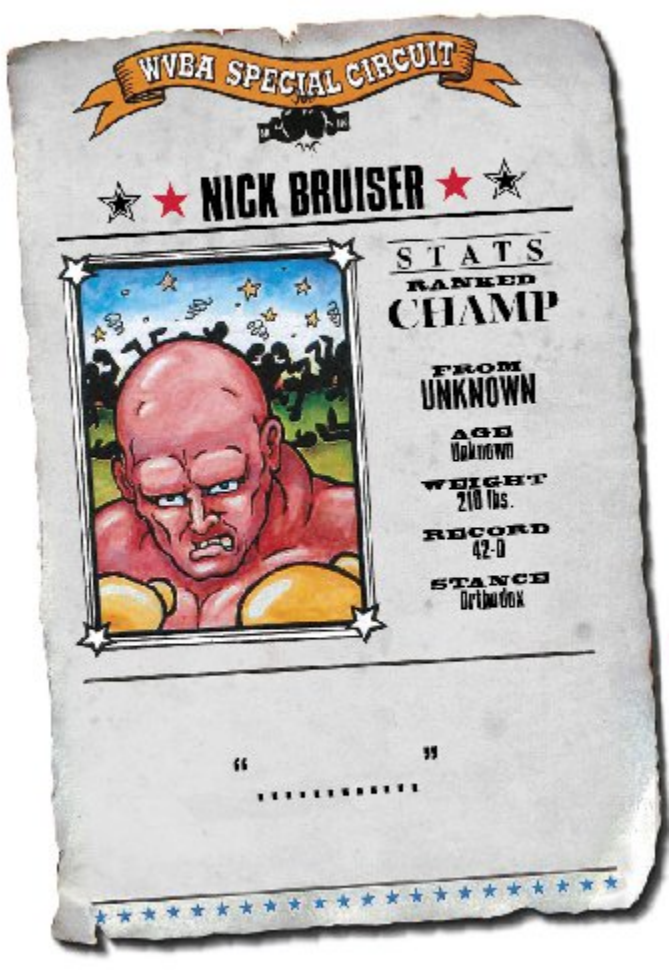
Super Macho Man was the final opponent in both the *Super Punch-Out!!* arcade game, as well as the Japanese version of *Punch-Out!!* for the Super Famicom. When not training on the beaches of Venice he's defending his title as World Circuit Champion with a surplus of one-hit KO attacks.

Narcis Prince is a narcissistic fighter much like *Street Fighter*'s Vega. He skillfully blends offense and defense in a more punishing manner than any opponents before him, but punches to his face send him into a blind rage. The V on his sweater stands for "Victory," which he has already assured himself will be the result of the match.



Both the oldest and lightest boxer in the W.V.B.A., Hoy Quarlow appears to be a frail old man relying on a cane to move. However, players quickly learn that Quarlow is the *Punch-Out!!* equivalent of Yoda, with deceptively fast attacks and dodges. He wields his wooden staff as a weapon in the ring in addition to utilizing various martial arts.

The younger of the Bruiser Bros., Rick's sole loss came to his twin brother, an event he regrets every day. He secretly seeks revenge and "practices" against any and all challengers. Rick smiles and talks more than his brother, and also sports an earring, but otherwise is essentially identical in both style and appearance.

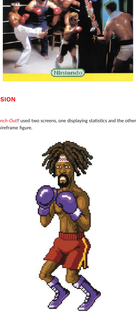


This Frankenstein-esque beast of a man is the final opponent of *Super Punch-Out!!* Having beaten out his own brother for the title of Special Circuit Champion, Nick's array of powerful attacks can quickly destroy even experienced players.

Despite their time at the top in *Super Punch-Out!!*, the mysterious Bruiser Brothers do not reappear elsewhere in the series.

1 SUPER FAMICOM BOX ART

Super Punch-Out!! was released in Japan in 1998, four years after its Western release.

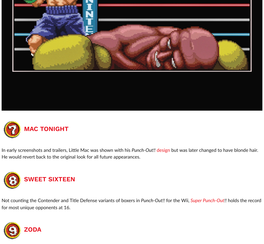


2 ARCADE VERSION

The arcade version of *Super Punch-Out!!* used two screens, one displaying statistics and the other the gameplay. The player character appears as a green wireframe figure.

3 A TALE OF TWO BOBS

Boxer Bob Charlie resembles reggae musician Bob Marley in both appearance and name. Who wishes they were a fly on the wall during that meeting?



4 BEARS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN

In the Wii version of *Punch-Out!!*, Bear Hugger is shown training with a real bear, proving once and for all that hugging bears is the easiest way to befriend them.

5 HERE COMES A HURRICANE!

Piston Hurricane is often confused with Piston Honda. Piston Hurricane appeared in the original *Punch-Out!!* arcade game, but was replaced by Honda in the NES version. On top of their first names, they also share similar fighting styles and "Rush" signature moves.

6 GLASS JOE'S SCHOOL OF FREAK ACCIDENTS

Although Nick Bruiser's in-game record shows no losses, *Nintendo Power* claimed he did in fact lose to none other than Glass Joe in a "freak accident."

7 MAC TONIGHT

In early screenshots and trailers, Little Mac was shown with his *Punch-Out!!* design but was later changed to have blonde hair. He would revert back to the original look for all future appearances.

8 SWEET SIXTEEN

Not counting the Contender and Title Defense variants of boxers in *Punch-Out!!* for the Wii, *Super Punch-Out!!* holds the record for most unique opponents at 16.

9 ZODA

Nintendo IRD developed *Super Punch-Out!!* simultaneously with Zoda's Revenge: *Star Tropics II*, which was the penultimate first-party Nintendo game released for the NES.

10 IT'S-A-ME, MARTINET!

Mario voice actor Charles Martinet is credited with voicing *Super Punch-Out!!*'s announcer, referee, and boxers. Mario himself appears as the referee in the NES version of *Punch-Out!!*

11 SWITCHING IT UP

Some boxers change their tactics under certain conditions, such as being knocked down or after a set amount of time has passed, adding even more variety to the gameplay.

12 CORNERMEN

Each opponent has a cornerman who shouts instructions at their boxer. Most often these hint that Little Mac's adversary is about to use their signature attack. Sadly, Little Mac's own cornerman, Doc Louis, decided to sit out this game.

13 ARM WRESTLING

Nintendo IRD developed an arcade-only spin-off called *Arm Wrestling*. Released in 1985, the game featured five over-the-top opponents, including *Punch-Out!!*'s Bald Bull, masquerading as "Mask X".

14 LITTLE MAC PUNCHES IN!

Little Mac joined the *Super Smash Bros.* universe as a playable character in the series' fourth release. He was revealed during a Nintendo Direct stream commemorating the 30th anniversary of *Punch-Out!!*

15 SMASH MAC

To coincide with his Super Smash Bros. debut, Little Mac was given an amiibo. His appearance in both *Smash Bros.* and the amiibo figure is modeled after his design from the Wii version of *Punch-Out!!*

16 SOUND TEST

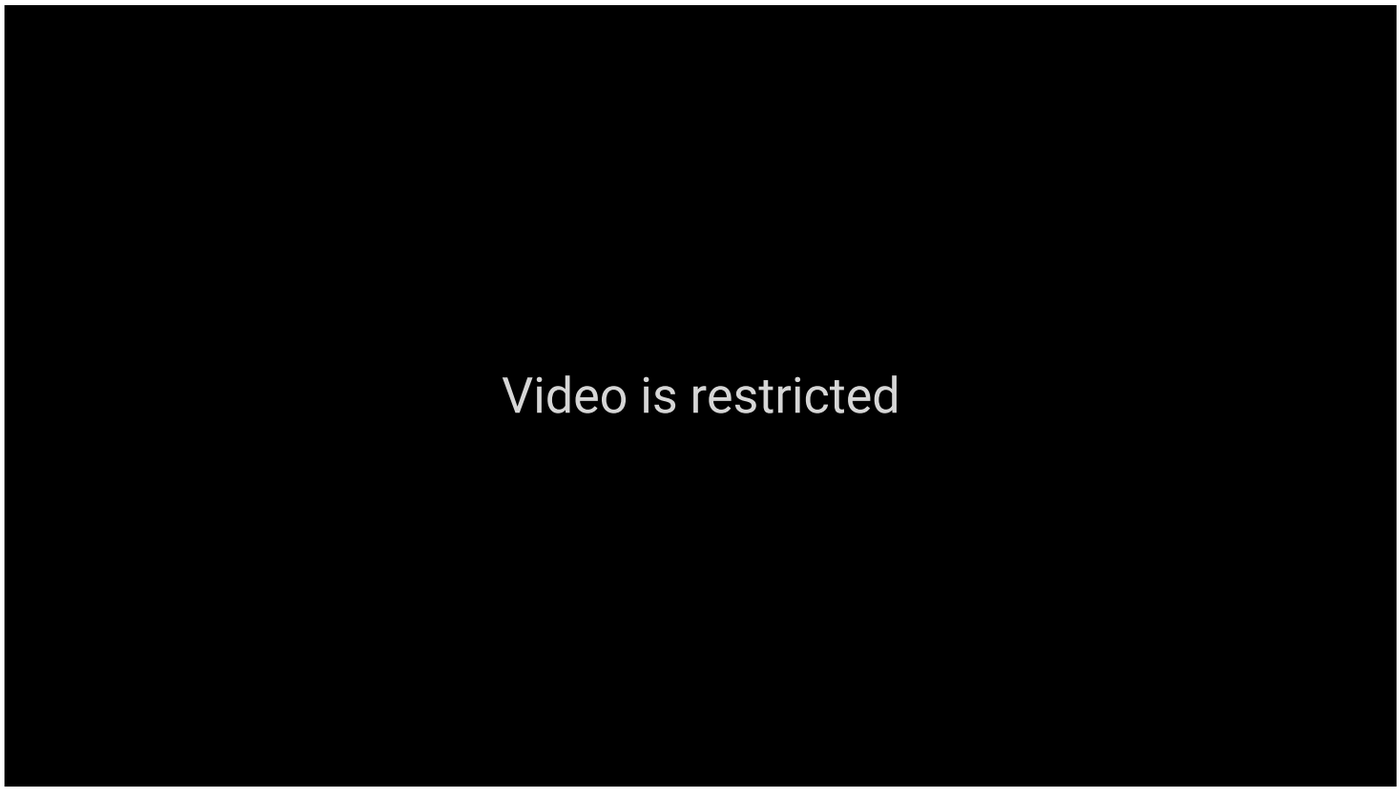
When starting the game, hold L+R on the second controller during the Nintendo logo to access *Super Punch-Out!!*'s sound test.

HEY... YOU LOOK FAMILIAR...

A "palette swap" is a game development term when an existing asset is given a different color to more easily create a new character while saving precious computer memory. An example of a basic palette swap would be Mario and Luigi in many of the early Mario Bros. games or Sub-Zero and Scorpion in the original Mortal Kombat. Some palette swaps are more akin to Ken and Ryu from Street Fighter II, who share similar animations but with a few cosmetic changes to further differentiate them, such as Ryu's red hachimaki and Ken's longer hair.

Nearly half of the characters in the 2D *Punch-Out!!* titles are enhanced palette swaps of each other. Using certain boxers' animations as a foundation, the developers of *Super Punch-Out!!* were able to build new characters with altered appearances while conserving production time and costs.

Super Punch-Out
Confidential Information



Speedrunner zallard1

World Records Held:*Punch-Out!!* (arcade) – Loop 1 (2m 18s), *Super Punch-Out!!* (arcade) – Loop 1 (2m 55s) & High Score (1,917,800 points), *Punch-Out!!* (NES) – Nine individual fight world records, *Super Punch-Out!!* (Super NES) – All individual fight world records (16) & Any% (2m 43 seconds 370 ms), *Punch-Out!!* (Wii) – Seven individual fight world records & Credits High Score (1,040,500), *Splatterhouse* (13m 2s), *Doc Louis' Punch-Out!! – Any% (2m 2s)*, *NES Remix 2* & *Ultimate NES Remix* (all *Punch-Out!!* world records)

If you think *Super Punch-Out!!* can be tricky, imagine doing it blind-folded live in front of over 100,000 people. Current world record holder, zallard1, has done exactly that, and made it look easy, too. But the IRL W.V.B.A. champion started from the bottom, just like Little Mac. "My initial runs were pretty bad when compared to where it is now, but that's kind of the beauty of it. Your first run has no expectations to live up to; just finish the game as best as you can, and try to beat it faster next time."

So how did the champ train for his shot at the title? "I tried to experiment with fights to find strategies that are both consistent, and require minimal luck while still being pretty fast," says zallard1. "This is definitely the most fun part of the process in my opinion since the feeling of finding something useful for the speedrun is really satisfying. There's never really an end to this part of the process because as far as this game goes, you could always find strategies that have different levels of risk associated with them."

zallard1's following tips reinforce the notion that *Super Punch-Out!!* has far more depth than its simple control scheme and cartoonish exterior would initially suggest. "The non-linearity of speedrunning this game is definitely a big part of the appeal for me," explains zallard1. "The strategies to getting fast fights are not always obvious in this game. You often need to get a slower first phase and deal extra damage before delivering a knockdown punch to make opponents get up with less heath in order to get a faster overall time. The counter-intuitive solutions to some fights really keep things interesting."

Basic

Guard Manipulation

This is basically how you're able to sneak punches through their guard while they're just standing around in between attacks. At the start of a fight, as well as when someone gets up from being knocked down, the opponent reads where your gloves are during the very first instant that you are able to move, and puts their gloves there to protect themselves. For example, if you press nothing as a fight starts, the opponent's gloves are down, whereas if you hold Up, their gloves protect their face.

Fortunately for us, they keep their guard in whatever spot you choose and leave the opposite spot completely unguarded. This is the most important part to understand for getting fast times, because if you just look at a video of a fight and attempt to replicate it punch for punch, you will find that the opponent will probably not let you land the first few punches that you want. Ideally for the fastest times, you want your guard to be in the opposite spot for the first frame of a fight, then the second frame you want your attack to start going off. It's also worth noting that this technique cannot be used on Bear Hugger at all, and can only be used on Nick Bruiser after 25 seconds.

Buffering Inputs and Punch Damage

The *Punch-Out!!* games have a quirk to them that can be seen in some fighting games where you can chain attacks together by pressing the input of the next attack during a particular time window from your previous attack. This is known as a "buffered" input, although for the *Punch-Out!!* games, you can actually hold the button down during any part of the previous attack, making it easier than your typical buffered attack in other fighting games. For example, if you punch Gabby Jay in the face with a left jab, while that jab is connecting with his face, you can let go of the Punch button and re-press it. This makes your boxer throw another left jab on the first possible frame he is available to. This concept may seem really minor, but it just so happens to be the most useful tool that this game offers you!

All four of your normal punches have different speeds from each other, as well as your two super punches, and your two different types of super rapid punches! They also deal different amounts of damage. Your left jab is the fastest punch, but is also the weakest, whereas your right body blow is your slowest normal attack, but is the strongest normal punch you have. The other two punches are kind of in between as far as speed and damage go. The uppercut also deals more damage than your hook, but both are really powerful super attacks.

What's also very useful is that in the *Punch-Out!!* games, you can buffer all of your dodges as well! There are three different set speeds that your dodges can reach depending on what you press on the D-pad, and when you press it. This may seem like a weirdly insignificant detail to spend so much time focusing on, but during the next section, I explain why all of these movements and attacks having different speeds is so significant.

Instant Knockdown Buffer Strategies

Opponents in this game can be put in a "dizzy state" when they are hit consecutively several times in a small timeframe. Their dizzy animation typically has the opponent "leave" the center of the ring as they're reeling from the vicious assault they just received. During this moment, you can try to throw attacks, but every one of them will whiff due to the opponent not being right in front of you. As they approach you and regain their composure to resume the fight, there is a small frame window where, if a punch lands, they are instantly floored and their entire health bar is completely drained. That moment where they leave the center of the ring is key, because you can buffer a series of punches and/or dodges such that you can hit that very tight frame window. Every. Single. Time.

That's right, if you find a buffered combination of movements and attacks that floors the opponent once, it will floor them forever. This is why it's so incredible that all of your attacks and dodges take up different amounts of time, because that means you have so many options to find a solution for just about every instant knockdown in the game.

BONUS 16670
SCORE 1970
TIME 1'20"58
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Counter Punches

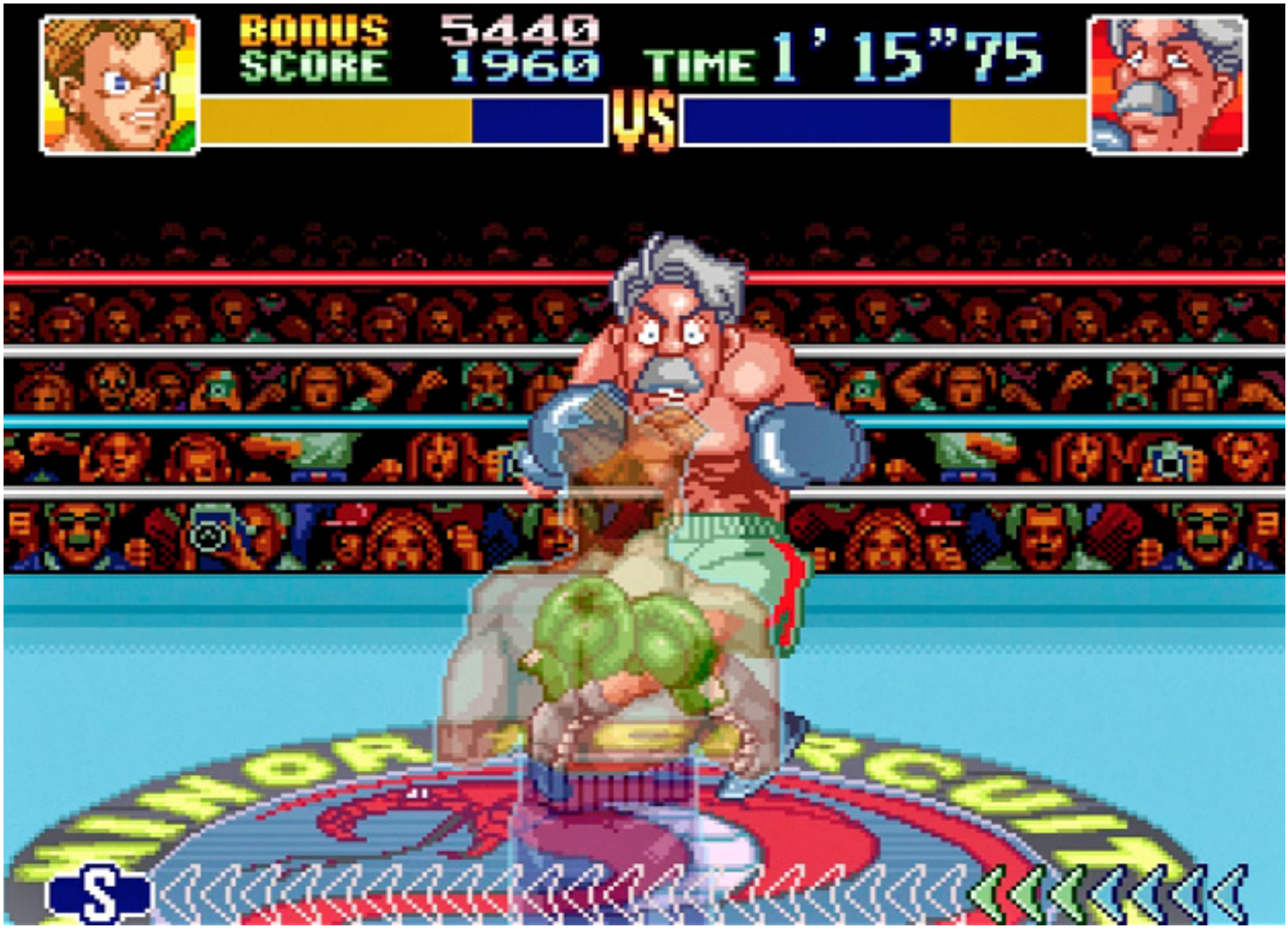
In the *Punch-Out!!* games, most people deal damage by dodging an opponent's attack, then throwing an attack to stun them and following up with several more attacks while they're stunned. For the most part, these strategies do something way more aggressive and risky than that. Instead, we counter the opponent's attack head-on. This requires some knowledge of what the opponent is going to throw ahead of time, what timing you need to successfully counter an attack, and what types of punches will counter them. The reason countering attacks is so important is because it stuns the opponent just like a dodge would, but it's also faster; it deals more damage; it gives you more arrows in your super meter to throw super punches faster; and it makes the opponent dizzy much sooner than any other punch in the game! With all of these advantages, it's pretty obvious why counter punching is essential to getting fast fights.

These are the most important concepts to understand before diving into the fight-by-fight strategies. Because of how complicated most of the later fights get with all of the luck involved, I'm going to just give general tips for those. However, for many of the early fights, this should be enough information to be able to do really nice speedruns up through the Minor Circuit. Let's get into some fights!

Know Your Enemy

Gabby Jay

The first thing you want to do is to lower his guard and start throwing jabs at his face. If you're fast enough on the first jab and buffer the rest, you should be able to fit five left jabs in before you see Gabby wind up for an attack. After that, you want to buffer two right jabs, then buffer an uppercut by holding Up+A. This makes him dizzy, so if you follow that by buffering the longest possible duck by holding Down, then hold B as your boxer nears the end of the duck animation, then buffer an uppercut, you should KO him in under seven seconds.



If you want a slightly more advanced strategy, you could start off with the same five left jabs, but instead, delay a right jab to counter his left jab. This punch gives you the rest of the arrows you need to fill the super meter, but it fills up really slowly, so you won't be able to throw the punch immediately, which lets enough time pass and Gabby won't get dizzy. However, if you pause the game as soon as the counter connects, you can let the arrows fill up during the pause, which lets you throw the super punch immediately once you unpause the match. This will dizzy Gabby even faster than the other method, so just pull off the same set of movements I mentioned earlier to deal with the dizzy knockdown, and you should get a low six second time.

Bear Hugger

This fight can get really difficult depending on how far you want to push it. The easiest method to get 17 seconds is to throw a jab to make him do a bear hug, then duck it and throw five left jabs. Do the same thing a second time, then on his third bear hug, just throw two left jabs and an uppercut. This makes Bear Hugger back off at about 13 seconds, so once he's back in the center of the ring, just counter his jab with a right jab, then buffer two uppercuts back to back to make him dizzy. While he's dizzy, buffer a duck and cancel it by throwing two left body blows immediately after the duck goes off, then buffer an uppercut out of that. You should have Bear Hugger down at a high 17-second time.

If you want to cut off even more time, then you have to counter his taunts by punching him in the stomach. This is only possible in the brief moment as Bear Hugger points at his belly, otherwise he'll actually be completely invulnerable to gut shots. This won't deal any damage, but it still makes him go dizzy pretty fast and stuns him. To time the gut counter so that the dizzy works, look at Bear Hugger's feet and use that as a visual cue for your punch. He moves his feet two times, so once you see that second movement, that's the instant you want to throw your punch. Start off the same way and get five left jabs after ducking his hug attack. Then you need to counter his gut with a left body blow as early as possible and follow it up with two left jabs. Counter his gut really early again and throw a left jab and an uppercut, then counter his gut one more time and immediately uppercut him. He will go dizzy immediately after this, so just use the same sequence I mentioned before to floor him.

One interesting thing about this strategy is that he actually gets up with a sliver of health, but any super punch keeps him from getting up again. If you time a rapid super jab to hit him as he prepares his own jab, you should get a KO at about 14-15 seconds on the clock, which is pretty sweet. There are faster times than this that you could get, but they require ridiculous luck and execution that's incredibly difficult.

Piston Hurricane

This fight is not random at all as long as you don't mess up anything. The easiest method to remember is to lower his guard, then throw eight left jabs to make him dizzy, then throw another left jab while he reels back. Then dodge/duck and hold A as soon as the dodge starts to cancel your dodge into a super punch for an instant knockdown. When he gets up, just buffer the A button and he goes down for good. If you want a faster time, you could rearrange the punches in the first part of the fight to be: three left body blows, three left jabs, and one left body blow to get him into a dizzy in under five seconds. Just hold the A button again, and you should have well under six seconds for this fight.

Bald Bull

The strategy for this fight is pretty simple, thankfully. Just raise his guard and throw two right gut punches, then counter his following attack with a well-timed right body blow to counter his next attack. While he's stunned, throw a left jab then a right body blow. He's going to throw a jab immediately after this, so counter it with a left jab of your own, then throw one left jab and then uppercut him and he should get dizzy. Buffer a left jab, right jab, and uppercut to get the instant knockdown on him. Because of the extra damage you dealt from the body blows, he gets up with a pretty low health refill. When he gets up, manipulate his guard up and just hit him with a right body blow and buffer that into an uppercut to take him down a second time. Because he's scripted to throw a Bull Charge for the third part of the fight, he's always going to get up a third time. Thankfully, even the Bull Charge doesn't stand a chance against buffer strategies! Buffer a right jab, then do a duck and cancel out of it by pressing Y near the start of the duck animation to throw a left body blow. 50% of the time, Bull will get hit by that body blow. However, the other 50% of the time will have him do a small delay, but if you buffer another left body blow, then he'll get hit by that one instead! Either way, this should net you a time well under nine seconds.

Bob Charlie

This is where the randomness in this game starts to get ridiculous. The general strategy you want to go for is to land several jabs in a row in order to dizzy him, so you just lower his guard and wail away at him and hope he reels to the back of the ring. If he does, you can buffer a left jab, right body blow, right body blow, and uppercut to floor him. Once he gets up, try to sneak in an uppercut after lowering his guard. To do that, just make sure you are not holding the Uppercut input before the ref calls “FIGHT” or throwing the punch too early. If all goes well, he should be KO’d if it connects.

Dragon Chan

The punches for this fight can be tricky to time, just because of Dragon Chan's animations being so long when he winds up to attack. Make it a point to wait a tiny bit longer when you throw punches at him if he's attempting to attack you. Start by manipulating his guard up and throwing two left body blows. Then you want to throw two delayed right body blows to intercept his hooks as he's backing up. He'll attempt another hook, which you can counter with a well-timed left body blow. Now, buffer a right body blow, then while he's stunned, do a duck and cancel it by holding the B button to do a delayed gut punch to dizzy him. Once he's dizzy, you can just buffer a right jab into an uppercut for the knockdown.

One thing to mention, which is pretty rare, is the need for delayed punches when the opponent is stunned. If you land a delayed hit on the perfect frame, it actually gives you more arrows for your super meter than a normal punch would, and it's also faster in some circumstances. Once he gets up, he'll do one of three things: heal himself immediately, heal himself with a slight delay, or do three kicks that you have to dodge. To deal with all of these situations, you can do a quick duck into a left jab and react to what he does from there. If he blocks your punch, get ready to dodge the three kicks and do rapid gut punches to finish him off at about 12 seconds. If the punch doesn't hit him, he's about to heal, so follow that up with an uppercut. If it lands, it'll either knock him down at a high seven-second time, or he'll still be up since he healed a little bit. If this happens, then just buffer a long left dodge by holding down Left the entire time, but as your boxer is finishing his dodge animation, switch to holding the A button and you'll finish him off at about 10 seconds with a hook.

Masked Muscle

This is the first fight where the opponent has a "random guard" which means even if you manipulate the opponent's guard correctly, sometimes you will be blocked regardless. The general strategy here is to try to fit in three left jabs and a right one at the end, but if you get blocked anywhere, then you want to counter his hook and uppercut with well-timed right body blows, then use left body blows until the stun ends. If you do get all four jabs, then counter the uppercut and do two left jabs before throwing a super hook. Either way, once you counter the uppercut and follow up with a hook, he will get dizzy, so buffer a duck, but don't cancel it with an attack or hold Down, just tap Down briefly. Once the duck animation is about to end, *then* you want to hold A to throw a hook; this knocks him down.

Phase two is really simple with this setup, because you should be able to just buffer a left body blow into a hook and he should take it 95% of the time. If he doesn't, then he's about to spit at you, so get ready to dodge it and punish his attack, or if you're feeling confident, you can counter his spit directly with a really well-timed jab and finish him off that way.

Mr. Sandman

Thankfully this fight isn't random at all if you don't mess up. Drop his guard and buffer four left jabs, then a left body blow. Now, you have to do another left body blow, but you *must* delay it ever so slightly or else he blocks it, then buffer a left jab and he goes dizzy. Now, if you buffer a left jab, right jab, left jab into your super hook, he should go down. This buffer actually wastes a few frames, but it makes his next attack come out faster when he gets up, which simplifies things because now when he gets up, you just have to hold the input for an uppercut and he'll immediately hit the mat again.

For the last phase, you want to throw a delayed uppercut such that it hits him as he tries to throw a hook at you. This timing is tricky, and the timing will vary wildly depending on what platform you play on (original Super NES, Wii VC, Wii U VC, and Super NES Classic all have different timings from each other). Once you hit that first uppercut, dodge his three Dreamland Express uppercuts and stun him with a right jab and follow up with an uppercut. After that, just do a quick dodge by pressing

Left and then Up really quickly and do one more uppercut. That finishes him off at around 13 seconds!

Aran Ryan

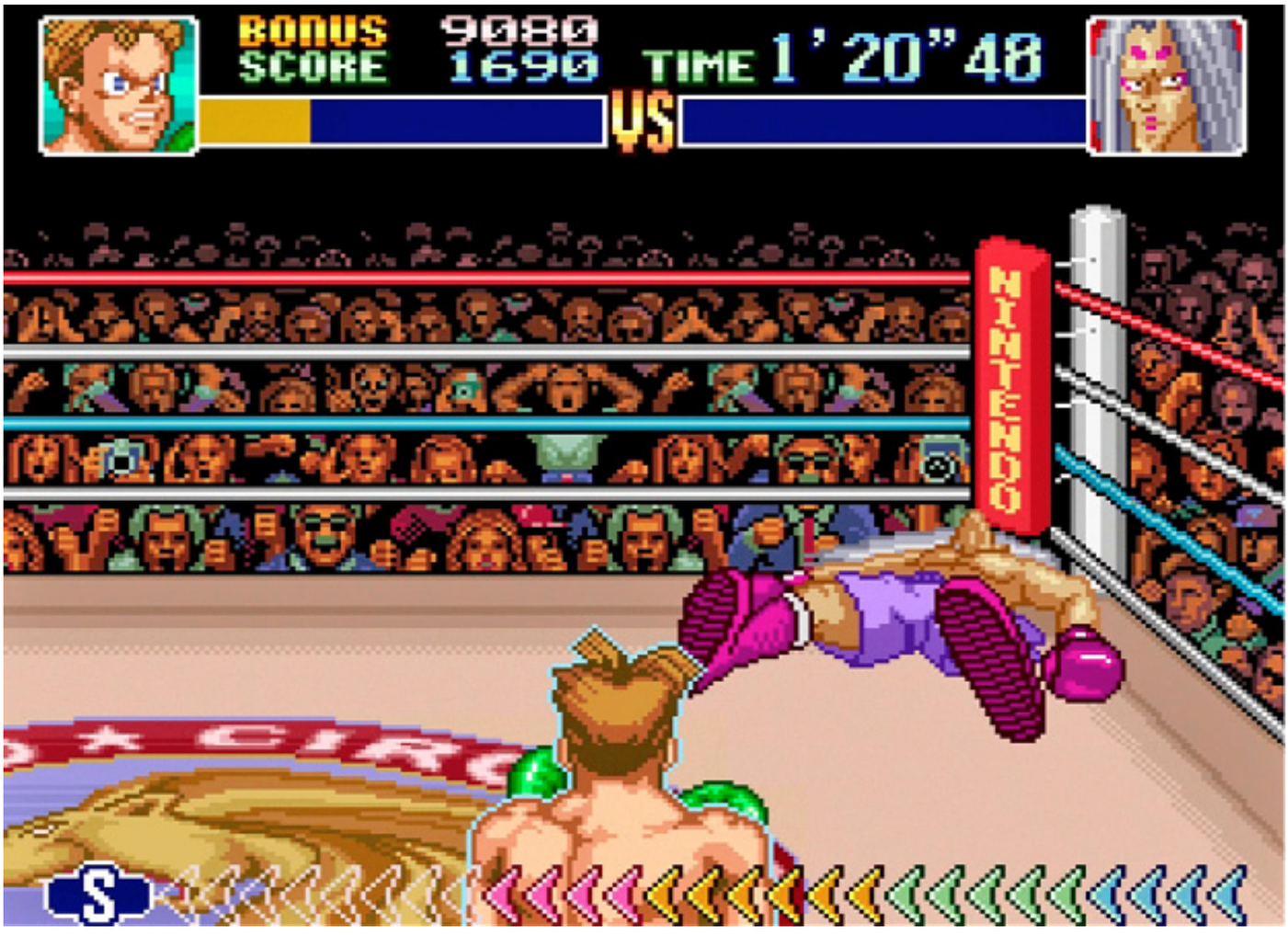
There are a few ways to go about this fight, so I'm just going to give general tips beyond the first phase. Start off by manipulating his guard up and throwing two left body blows, then delay ever so slightly and throw two more in a row. He'll respond by hopping to the left side of the ring, so once he lands in place again, hit him with a left jab and just throw left body blows until he gets dizzy. While he's dizzy, do a duck and immediately cancel that into a left body blow by holding Y immediately after hitting Down, then buffer a left jab and super hook for a low five-second knockdown.

Once he gets up, buffer a super hook, then he'll attempt to grapple you, but he has two different timings for it. Just do your best to guess which one he does; if you guess right, you get an eight-second KO on him, otherwise he grapples you, so shake out of it by hitting all directions and face buttons rapidly, then try to get your meter all the way full and attempt a super punch again. He'll likely get up a third time in this situation, so if he does, just manipulate his guard down and go for an uppercut. The good thing about Aran Ryan is that, despite his high resistance to your normal punches, he's extraordinarily weak to your super punches, so doing a little improvisation on the fight when things go sour isn't too bad.

Heike Kagero

So, this fight requires very little luck when everything goes right, which is really nice, but it also requires some pretty strict timing on your rapid punches. By that, I mean, at the start of phases two and three, if your rapid punches are not coming out as soon as possible, you will get punched, so I'll go over that in a bit. Start off by raising his guard and buffering six left body blows and one right jab to make him dizzy, then buffer a right jab into a duck, then cancel it with a hook and you should have a really good knockdown time of about five seconds.

For phase two, you need those quick rapid punches, but **do not** mash the A button, it will not work consistently at all. So what I do here is hold the A button, then once the fight begins, I let go of A very, very briefly and hold the button again. If you do it fast enough, the punches automatically execute as fast as possible. Once those are going off, just buffer a left jab and wait until it goes off, then buffer a hook and Heike hits the mat for the second time. When he gets up again, just do the same input for the start of phase three and the rapid punches finish the fight automatically.



Mad Clown

This is one of the most random fights in the game, so here's a general game plan. You can sneak jabs in at the start if you're lucky, but don't count on it. If Mad Clown points at his stomach, you actually can't hit him with the same timing that you used on Bear Hugger, and if you attempt to attack early, he counterattacks you, so be careful with that. If you want to stun him off of that, you have to wait until he points at his stomach the second time instead of the first. Clown is scripted to throw a jab, so counter that when you get the chance, then he follows it up with a hook which you can counter with a right jab. If you counter those two and follow each of those stuns up with left jabs, he should get dizzy. If you don't have the super meter filled, then buffer a right body blow twice, then right jab for a knockdown. If you have the super meter filled, then the best option would be to throw a well-timed uppercut, but unfortunately, no consistent buffer exists for this yet, so good luck if you go for it. The timing for it is right before he starts drifting to the left if you want to try it.

For phase two, you want to cancel his next two moves; do that by buffering two left jabs and have him block both. Sometimes he likes to counterattack there because he likes taunting there too, so be ready to dodge and throw another left jab after if he does. After that, he goes for a backhand attack that you can counter with a left jab which is extremely weak to rapid punches, so follow up with rapid jabs once you counter him and he'll actually go dizzy for a second time! Here, you need to hit his dizzy with an uppercut manually, so just try to go for it as best as you can. Once he gets up a third time, he goes into a "Show Time" pattern which is super aggressive, but buffering a right jab to counter him and following it up with an uppercut should put that show to an end pretty promptly.

Super Macho Man

This fight also has a random guard, so don't worry if things don't go your way for a speedrun here. This fight tends to be one of the most random in terms of successfully getting a KO, but that requires banking on a ton of luck. Try to start the fight with one right gut punch after raising his guard, then counter his first jab with a right jab of your own. The punches Macho Man throws come out really fast, so you pretty much need to know when he throws them ahead of time, so don't feel discouraged if you can't get the timing down immediately! Once you stun him, throw two left body blows. If you got the first punch in the fight, you can buffer a right jab and counter his hook with a left body blow then throw another left body blow into a hook to dizzy him. If you didn't get the first punch to land, then after countering his first jab, you need to counter his second one and follow up with two more left body blows. Then counter his hook and do the pause trick that you did with Gabby Jay for your meter to fill up, then unpause and throw a hook immediately for him to go dizzy. Once he's dizzy, throw three left jabs and a hook to knock him down.

When he gets back up, you can go for the KO by attempting to raise his guard and doing a super hook, then countering his hook with a left body blow and following up with one more hook to floor him. The KO has several factors in play, but the main one depends on how fast you are in phase two. If you can end that phase within four in-game seconds, then your opponent generally won't be able to stand back up, but getting phase two quickly in many of these fights is tricky. To get such speedy phases, your opponents need to have as little health as possible, which is determined both by how many hits they took before they got instantly knocked down, and how quick the first phase was in general. This is a hard fight to get right; practice makes perfect!

Narcis Prince

This is the most random *Super Punch-Out!!* fight. The amount of potential situations this fight has is insane due to all the things Narcis can do in between scripted attacks, as well as what he dodges or blocks and what patterns he throws at you once you've landed a face punch. Covering all of the possibilities would be a futile effort, so I'm just going to discuss the scripted attacks. Narcis starts off by trying to do a hook at some point, which you can counter with a left body blow and follow up with a jab. The main goal of the fight is to get him mad by punching his face as soon as possible, because normally he protects his face very carefully and his guard doesn't leave many weaknesses open for you to take advantage of.

Once you land that jab, his pattern gets really reckless and he leaves his face completely unguarded, which lets you deal truckloads of damage if you try to do jabs, uppercuts, or even rapid jabs. Of those three options, go for the rapid jabs in order to get him dizzy. If you do get him to go dizzy, just buffer a quick duck into a hook and he's down. I would adhere to this general approach for the rest of this fight, because the randomness that you have to deal with is pretty rough.

Hoy Quarlow

Hoy has a bunch of randomness associated with him as you would expect judging from the previous fights I've talked about, but he has a move that completely erases your progress on how "dizzy" he can get—the cane shove. If you attempt to sneak hits in, he can randomly block you, but if he blocks you, he counters your attack by shoving you to the side with his cane. If this shove move happens, then this strategy is pretty much going to be toast, so you'll be on your own if that happens. Assuming he doesn't get the shove in, try to sneak in two left jabs, then wait until he goes into a striking stance and throw a delayed jab. He'll try to strike you low after that, so counter that attack with a right body blow and end the stun with a left jab. At this point, he can randomly change where his guard is, so hopefully he won't do that when you throw your next couple of attacks. If you haven't had any bad luck yet, try to sneak in one jab. If it lands, then just buffer a right body blow, left body blow, and he'll go dizzy! For the instant knockdown, just buffer a right body blow into a hook, which is nice and easy.

When he gets up, try to manipulate his guard up and throw two super hooks at him. He may duck one or both of them, in which case you need to throw one into his next attack. For phase three, if you didn't get any ducks from him, then time the last attack to hit him as he goes into a stance to start an attack. If you did get ducked, then try to raise his guard and land a hook, although prepare for a jab to counter if he ducks that too. This fight is arguably the hardest one in the game, so expect to practice this one a lot, even if you're just going through the game for your first playthrough.

Rick Bruiser

This is probably one of the hardest fights in the game the first time you play it, just because Rick likes to fake you out and counterattack any sneaky punches that you attempt to throw. However, once you know what to do, there's actually very little that's random here. Start off with a left jab and be prepared to dodge his counter jab. Once you're centered up from dodging the jab, counter his next jab with a right jab of your own, then buffer the following: right jab, right body blow, right jab, and two right body blows to get him dizzy. Follow it up with two left body blows and a hook for an easy knockdown on a pretty challenging fight!

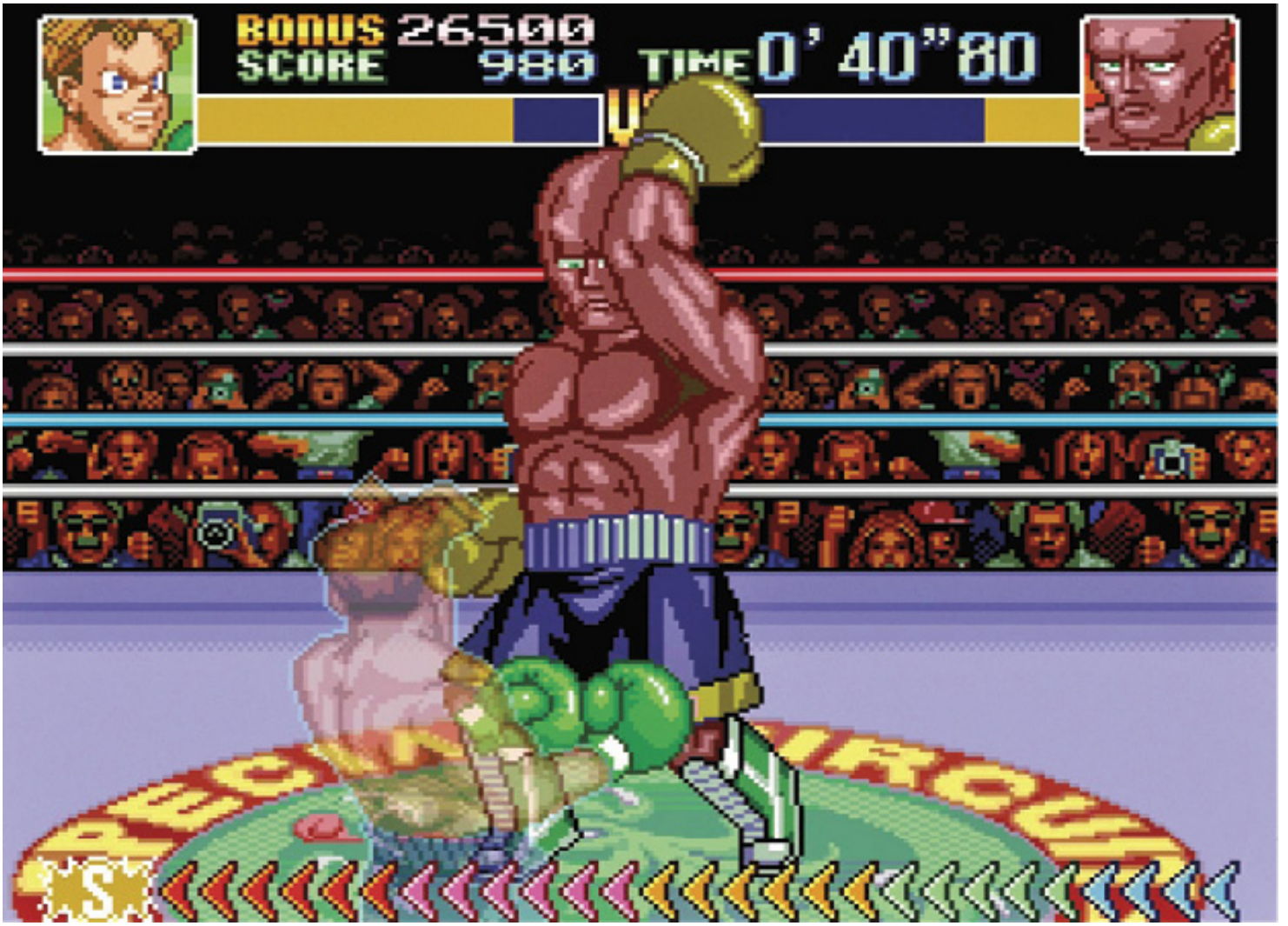
Once he gets up, lower his guard and throw a left jab. He'll counterpunch you since you landed a punch on his face, so dodge that and counter his hook with a right body blow. Just follow it up with a right jab and a super hook and he's down for a second time. Now for this third time, there is a 5/8ths chance that he lets an uppercut hit his face, so lower his guard and attempt one. If it lands, then congratulations on beating Rick in 11 seconds! If it doesn't, you can try to provoke him to elbow one of your gloves by throwing a body blow. If he shakes, then dodge and throw a hook for a 14-second time, otherwise he does a special attack that requires you to block low, block high, and dodge. Just tap Up once you block the first punch, then send him to the mat with a hook after you dodge the last punch for a 16-second time.

Nick Bruiser

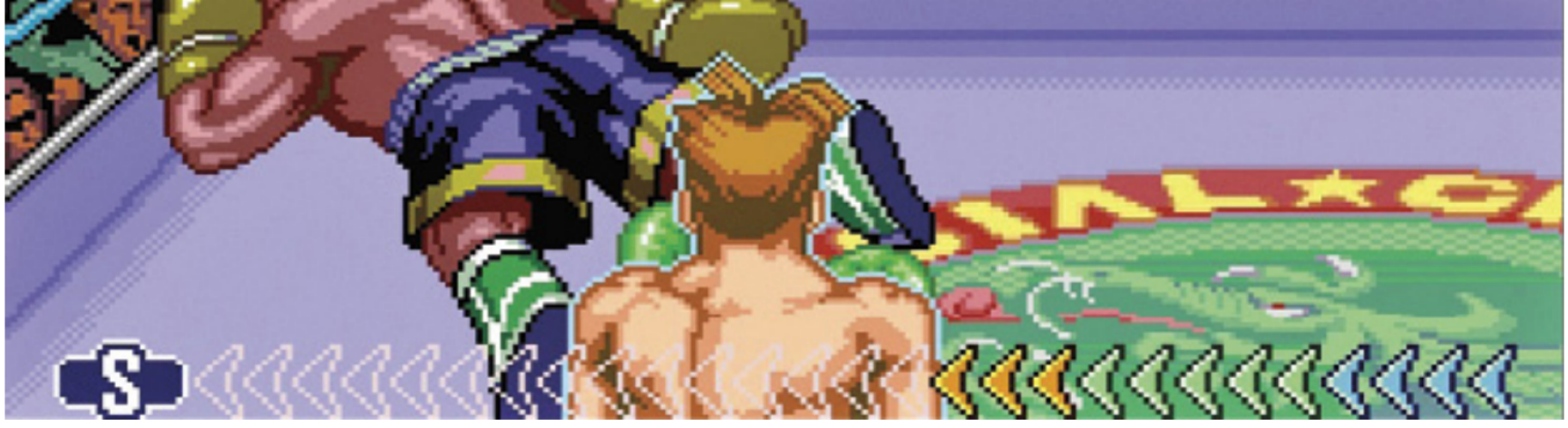
The way you approach the final fight of this game for a speedrun depends greatly on what platform you're playing on. The speedrun for this fight requires you to hit a counter, but the type of counterpunch you throw entirely depends on what stance you see Nick take. Because of inherent input lag on Virtual Console and HD televisions, humans cannot react in time to counter this attack consistently. If you're playing on Virtual Console or the Super NES Classic, then I would recommend just trying to guess what stance he takes and take a gamble. However, if you have an old SNES with the actual cartridge and a CRT television, then you are actually just barely able to feasibly react to him in time to counter him more consistently instead of banking on a 50/50 shot that could end your run.

BONUS 32560
SCORE 660
TIME 0'26"90
VS
NINTENDO

BONUS 2310
SCORE 2950
TIME 2'02"12
VS
NINTENDO



To start this fight, you can actually buffer two left jabs without any guard manipulation! Once you've done that, you're at the moment of truth. Nick is going to either put his gloves near his face or near his torso. If his gloves are high, then a right jab is sufficient to counter him, but if they're low, then a right body blow is the only thing that will counter him. If you don't land the counter, you could attempt to try again, but Nick will attack from your left side if you do so. Once you hit the counter, follow up with a left jab, right jab, left jab, then do a "medium" duck, which is just like the one for Masked Muscle where you tap Down, but don't hold it or cancel it with any other inputs. Near the end of the duck animation, buffer a right gut punch to get a delayed punch off of him for extra arrows, then buffer a left jab to finally get him dizzy.

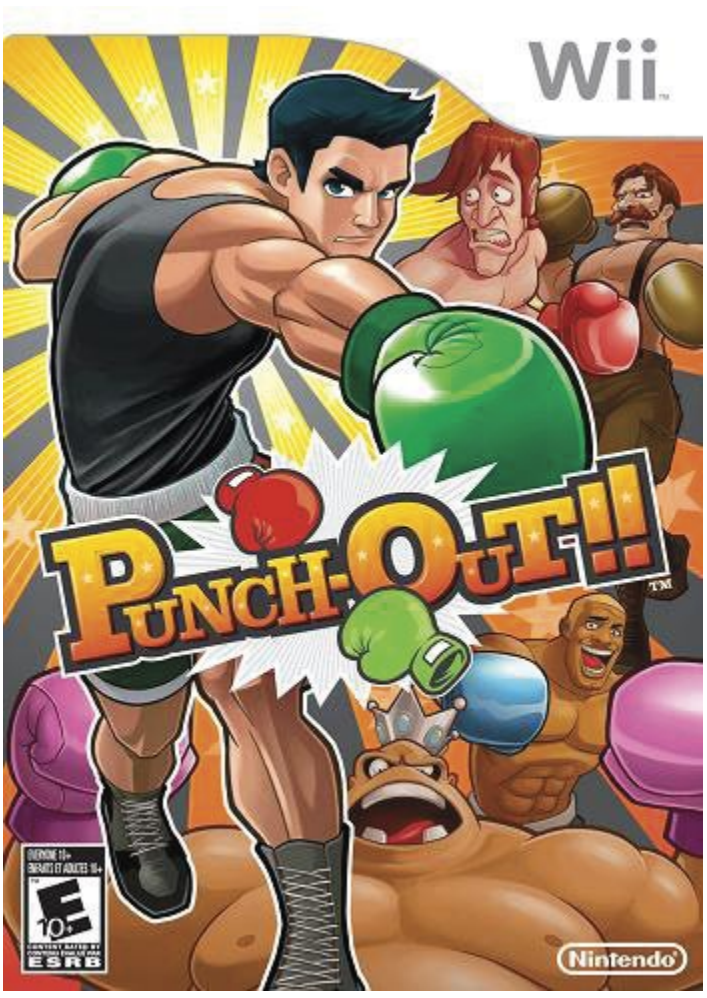


For Nick's dizzy knockdowns, two right body blows and two hooks will take him out. When he gets up, you have two options to KO Nick. You can either wait for him and hope he attacks immediately, then dodge and stun him with the appropriate punch (body blow if he attacked low, jab if he threw a jab of his own). Once he's stunned, buffer a hook and an uppercut and hope he takes the uppercut for the KO. The other option to KO him involves buffering a left jab at the start of phase two, then countering another attack of his on your left side. Once you hit that counter, just buffer a right jab into an uppercut for a slightly faster KO. The way the KO works on Nick is primarily time-based. If your timer is at 10"01 or earlier, then he's down for the 10 count, but if you are even one frame later than that at 10"03, then he gets up. Those two strategies should meet that time threshold handily.

SUPER NOSTALGIA

zallard1 and the current crop of speedrunners aren't the only players working to get fast knockouts in *Super Punch-Out!!*. *Nintendo Power* provided strategies to score quick KOs on each and every fighter.

Despite its beloved place in gaming history, the *Punch-Out!!* series has only seen three wholly unique game releases since its arcade debut in 1983.



Punch-Out!!

2009, Wii

A sequel was released for the Wii 15 years after the last *Punch-Out!!* title. Developed by Next Level Games (*Super Mario Strikers*, *Luigi's Mansion: Dark Moon*), *Punch-Out!!* retained much of the series' core gameplay mechanics and charismatic visuals. A dozen classic boxers from previous games join several new ones, including Donkey Kong!

Doc Louis's Punch-Out!!

2009, Wii

A standalone prequel to 2009's *Punch-Out!!*, *Doc Louis's Punch-Out!!* was released exclusively via the WiiWare service as a Platinum reward for the now-defunct Club Nintendo. The spin-off spans three increasingly difficult matches where Little Mac spars with his coach, the titular Doc Louis.

Super Punch-Out

Super Punch-Out!! Credits

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi

Minoru Arakawa

Producer

Genyo Takeda

Director

Makoto Wada

Assistant Director

Yasuyuki Oyagi

Chief Programmer

Masato Hatakeyama

Main Program

Shigeo Kimura

Seiji Okamoto

Koji Mitsunari

Tsutomu Koganezawa

Akihide Inano

Yoshihiko Masui

Art Director

Makoto Wada

Graphic Design

Hiroaki Takenaka

Yoshiyuki Kato

Yasushi Matsubara

Tomonori Matsunaga

Noriaki Sugimoto

Sound Composition

Takashi Kumegawa

Masaro Sakakibara

Product Debug & Testing Unit

Super Mario Club

NOA Product Testing Team

Special Thanks

Phil Sandhop

Mike Shapiro

Keiko Tamura

Ken Lobb

Charles Martinet

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Kirby Super Star

Overview

DEVELOPER

HAL Laboratory

PUBLISHER

Nintendo

RELEASE DATE

JP: March 21, 1996

NA: September 20, 1996

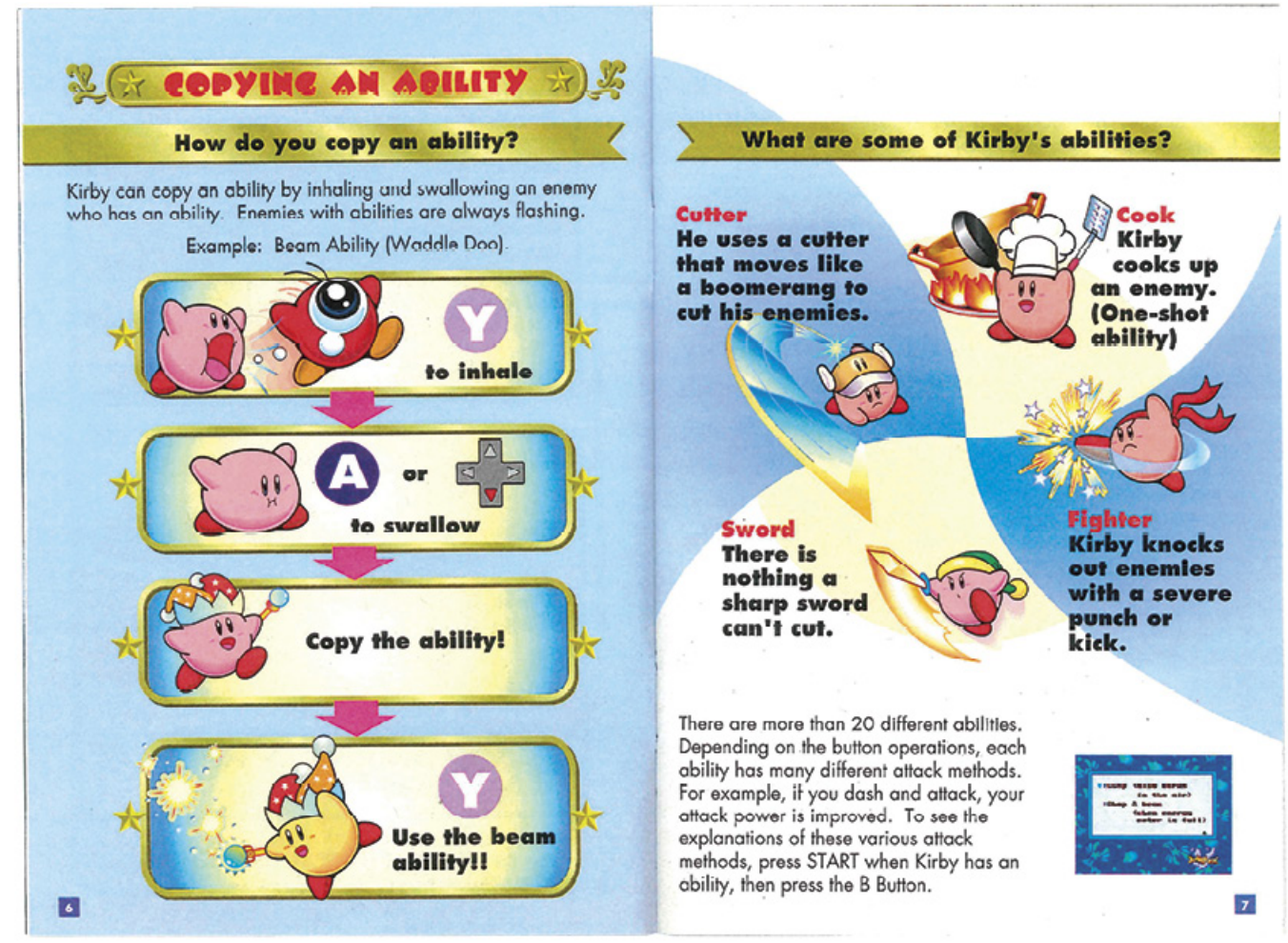
PAL: January 23, 1997

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Kirby Super Star

Development

Kirby Super Star was the eighth release in the *Kirby* series, which began just four years prior with 1992's *Kirby's Dream Land* for the Nintendo Game Boy. Whereas a few previous games had placed Kirby in unusual settings such as pinball and putt-putt, *Super Star* returned the titular pink poof to his platforming pedigree in spectacular fashion. Advertised as "8 games in one!" *Kirby Super Star* provided an unparalleled amount of content alongside various notable new mechanics, including the ability to block attacks and adventure with friends. The game's most poignant contribution to video-gaming history, however, was unarguably the hats...



Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Kirby Super Star

The History of Twinkle Pop

Kirby could have been—and was originally—named Twinkle Pop, according to former HAL Laboratory president, Satoru Iwata. Mr. Iwata, who served as a producer and programmer for the earliest *Kirby* titles, was joined by game director Masahiro Sakurai and producer Shigeru Miyamoto in an official 1993 roundtable discussing the rising star's origins. Seeking a more internationally appealing name, Kirby's creators solicited a list of suggestions from Nintendo of America. "We wanted a name that would sound like an American idol," recounted Mr. Miyamoto. Among the list sent by NOA were "Gasper," due to the character's penchant for inhaling copious amounts of air (and everything else in the vicinity), and Kirby. Like Mario, Kirby was the name of a real person with ties to NOA—this time being John Kirby, the lawyer responsible for defending Nintendo against a lawsuit from Universal City Studios, Inc., who claimed Donkey Kong had infringed on their King Kong character. Mr. Kirby won the case, citing a previous legal battle where Universal had argued in its own defense that King Kong was part of the public domain.

As thanks, Nintendo famously gave Mr. Kirby a sailboat named *Donkey Kong*, alongside exclusive worldwide rights to use said name for sailboats. But the admiration for Mr. Kirby's accomplishment didn't stop there, as his namesake was eventually chosen to live on forever through Nintendo's newest creation.

"Just after I joined Nintendo," said Mr. Sakurai, "they were accepting game design plans for 'a game that anyone could enjoy.' That got me thinking, 'I want to make a cute main character who everyone will love!'" This led to Kirby's debut title, *Kirby's Dream Land*, for the Game Boy in 1992. At the time it was developer HAL Laboratory's most successful game, with over 5M units sold to date. The game, due in large part to its immediately lovable lead character, single-handedly pulled HAL Laboratory from bankruptcy, which had been caused by Japan's far-reaching economic bubble collapse the previous year.

"When someone really loves a character, they like to sketch them in their notebooks," said Mr. Iwata. "That's why we gave Kirby a simple circular design, so anyone could draw him." Each team member responsible for the *Kirby* games had their own way of drawing Kirby. "Among our staff many people still call him Twinkle," said *Kirby's Adventure* designer Takashi Saitou. "So we call the fake Kirby drawings '[Blank] Twinkle.'" Mr. Iwata laughs, recalling, "The ones I draw, everyone calls 'Iwata Twinkle.' Only Sakurai can draw the real Kirby, and we call him 'Sakurai Kirby.'"

But Mr. Sakurai's favorite drawings of Kirby have always come from the fans: "After we released *Kirby's Dream Land*, I remember occasionally seeing chalk drawings and graffiti people had drawn of Kirby in parks and open spaces. I can't say that Kirby is going to [see the same success as] Mario, but I do want him to be a character that is always loved by everyone."

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Kirby Super Star

The Evolution of the Inhale

When creating Kirby, the team tossed around various concepts, including using enemies like soccer balls by heading and kicking them. “We came up with a lot of ideas,” said Mr. Iwata. “And the one that stuck was ‘flying.’ How would Kirby fly? By puffing up like a balloon! How would he do that? By inhaling the air. Wouldn’t it be fun, then, if he could inhale enemies at the same time? That was the basic thought process.” This multi-functional inhaling ability became the linchpin of all things Kirby.

Once Kirby was out in the wild, the developers began to gain valuable insight. “Kirby was originally designed to be a somewhat easy game, something that a young child could enjoy playing,” said Mr. Sakurai. “However, after *Kirby’s Dream Land* was released, there was a lot of feedback from players saying it was too easy and too short. For the sequel I was thinking, how can I retain the easy parts, but make it so skilled players could have fun too? That was when the idea of copying enemy abilities came to me.”

“For example,” explained Hiroaki Suga, who programmed *Kirby’s Adventure* and *Kirby’s Dream Course*, “even if you *could*just easily fly your way to the end of the level, by taking the Parasol ability you could enjoy the game in a whole new way. Each different ability would allow the player to approach the level differently. We wanted something players would enjoy experimenting with.”

Kirby started with over 40 different enemy abilities he could copy, but the team whittled that number down by choosing the best of the bunch. Some of the abilities that got cut included the ability to create Blocks that would assist in platforming or block incoming attacks; the ability to shrink, a la Mario; a rocket that could be ridden; and an ability called “Animal,” where Kirby could scratch and bite enemies. Each of these abilities eventually appeared in later *Kirby* games.

The Copy Abilities introduced in *Kirby’s Adventure* were fairly simple, despite the programmers on that project comparing the amount of work needed to implement them to completing multiple NES games. For *Kirby Super Star*, each ability was drastically expanded, providing a surprisingly robust moveset. And, of course, Kirby’s appearance now changed based on the type of ability he copied, whereas previously he would simply change color or equip an item. Anyone who doesn’t spontaneously vomit a rainbow upon beholding the unbearable cuteness that is Sword Kirby needs to use Copy Ability on *something with a soul*.

Kirby’s hats (or Ability Caps) would be seen in virtually all *Kirby* games (and merchandising) after *Super Star*. The same, unfortunately, can’t be said of *Kirby Super Star*’s new Helper mechanic, in which Kirby could turn an inhaled enemy into an AI-controlled companion. This feature also allowed a second player to control the Helper, essentially making the vast majority of *Kirby Super Star* into a potential two-player experience.

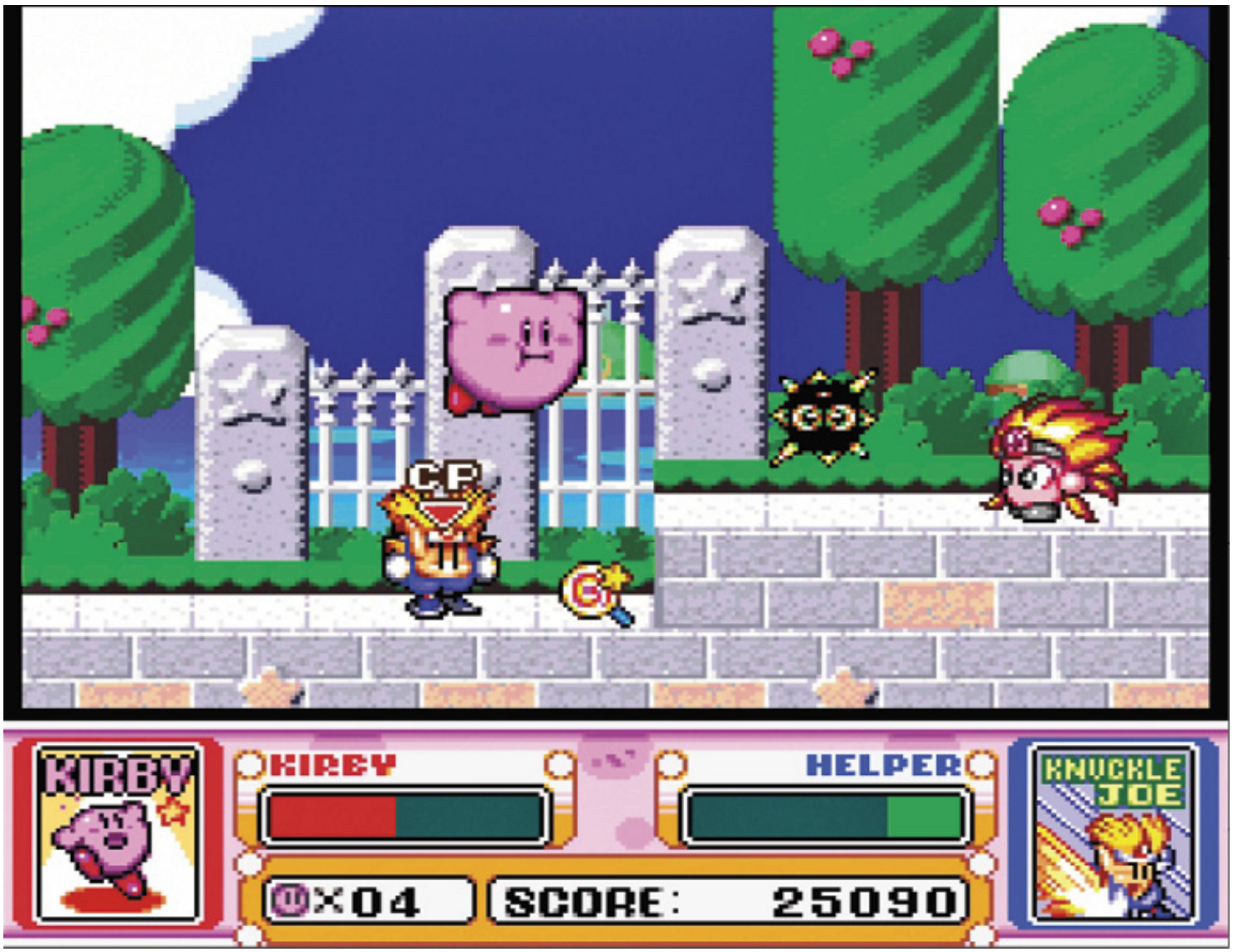
The Copy Ability and Helper mechanics provided a fairly astounding amount of variety and depth for the series. On its surface, *Kirby Super Star* could be experienced as a casual romp through a series of whimsical worlds, yet experimenting with new Copy Abilities and Helper combinations grants the game endless replayability. The goal of giving players a more robust and challenging *Kirby* game was certainly achieved with *Super Star*.

ENEMY / HELPER		COPY ABILITY	
	Bio Spark		Ninja
	Birdon		Wing
	Blade Knight		Sword
	Bonkers		Hammer
	Bugzzy		Suplex
	Burning Leo		Fire
	Capsule J		Jet
	Chilly		Ice
	Gim		Yo-Yo
	Knuckle Joe		Fighter
	Parasol Waddle Dee		Parasol
	Plasma Wisp		Plasma
	Poppy Bros. Jr.		Bomb
	Rocky		Stone
	Simirror		Mirror
	Sir Kibble		Cutter
	Starship (Helper)		Starship
	Tac		Copy
	Waddle Doo		Beam
	Wheelie		Wheel

Nintendo SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Spring Breeze

Kirby Super Star's intended introductory game is an enhanced remake of *Kirby's Dream Land*, and is a perfect example of the value on offer in this compilation. Players could experience Kirby's debut adventure but with all the bells and whistles of *Super Star*, including 16-bit audio/visuals, Copy Abilities, and Helpers, not to mention alongside a friend. The game was shortened slightly, with the removal of Castle Lololo and the boss rush originally featured upon arriving at Castle Dedede, as *Kirby Super Star*'s Arena game would fill this role on a much grander scale.

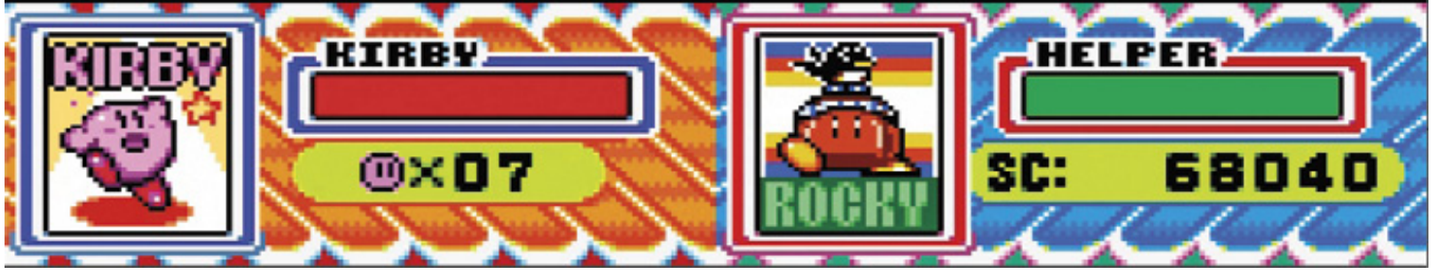


No good!
KIRBY
HELPER
KNUCKLE JOE
×03
SCORE: 24040

WARP STAR
KIRBY
HELPER
KNUCKLE JOE
×04
SCORE: 28450

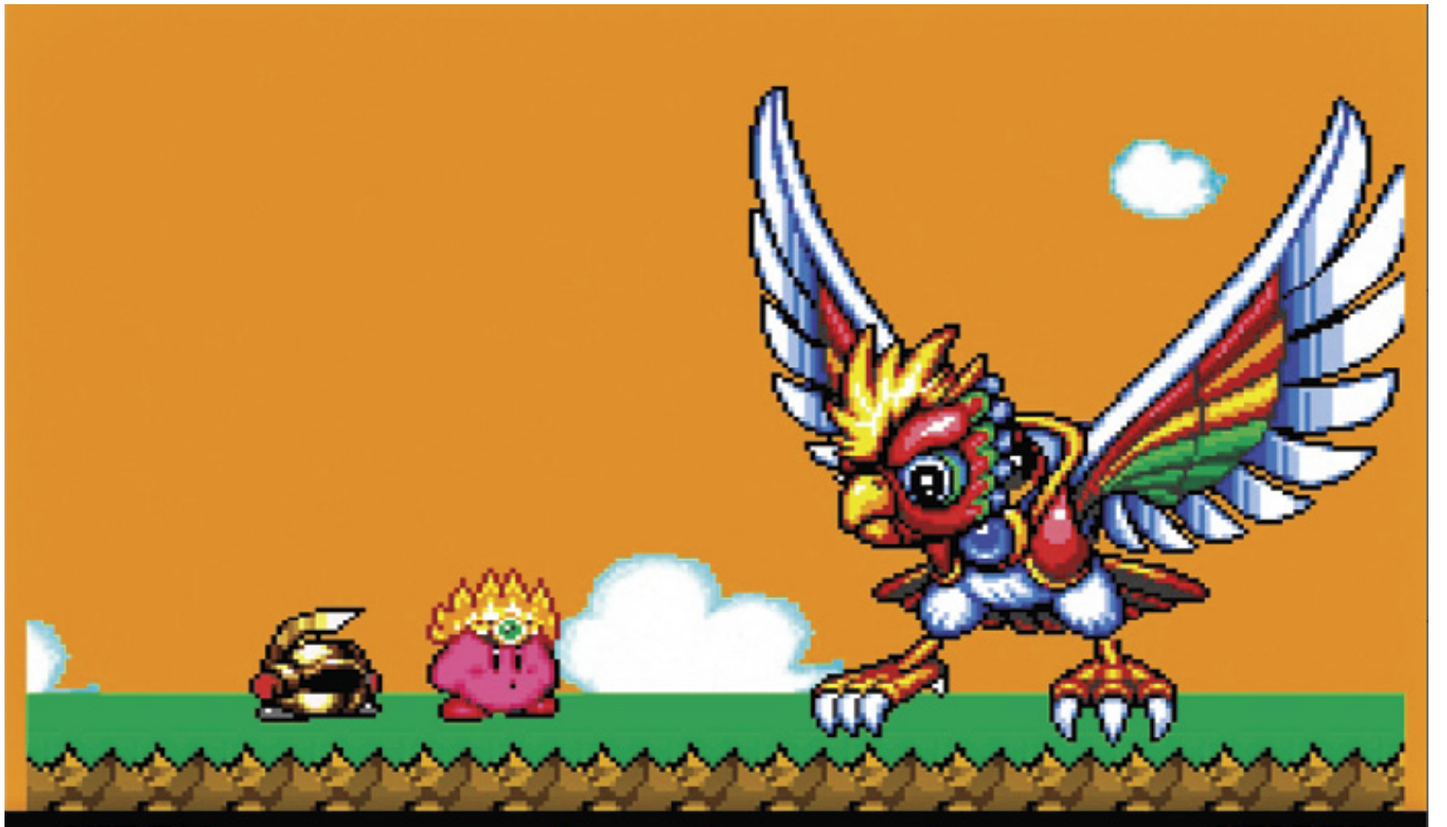
Dyna Blade

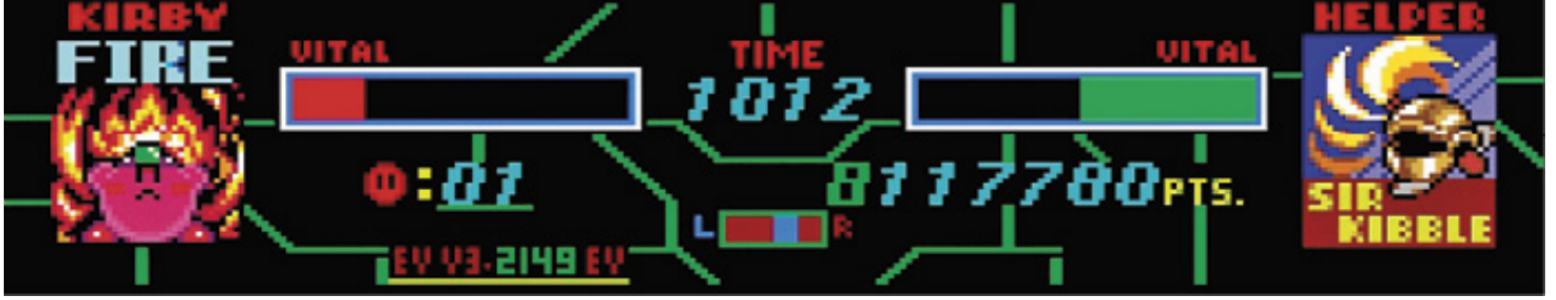
Dyna Blade requires Kirby to trek across four levels before facing off against the giant bird for which this game was named. There are two secret areas and a challenging mini-boss that moves across the world map, similar to the Hammer Bros. in *Super Mario Bros. 3*. Turns out Dyna Blade's actions were all just a ruse to make Kirby raise her baby chicks.

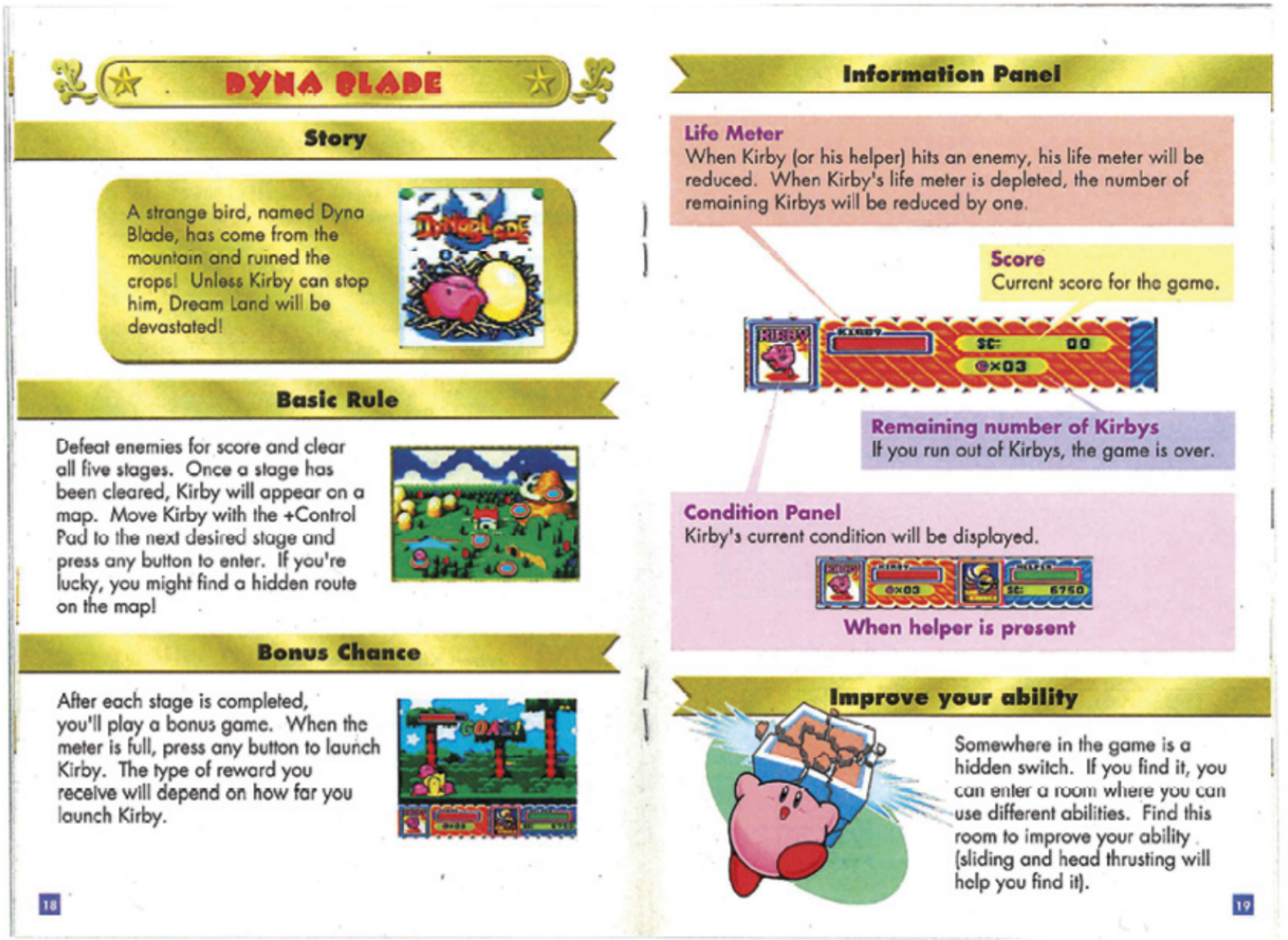

KIRBY
KIRBY
×07
ROCKY
HELPER
SC: 68040

GOAL!
1UP
1UP
1UP
=1

KIRBY
KIRBY
SC: 109110
×07

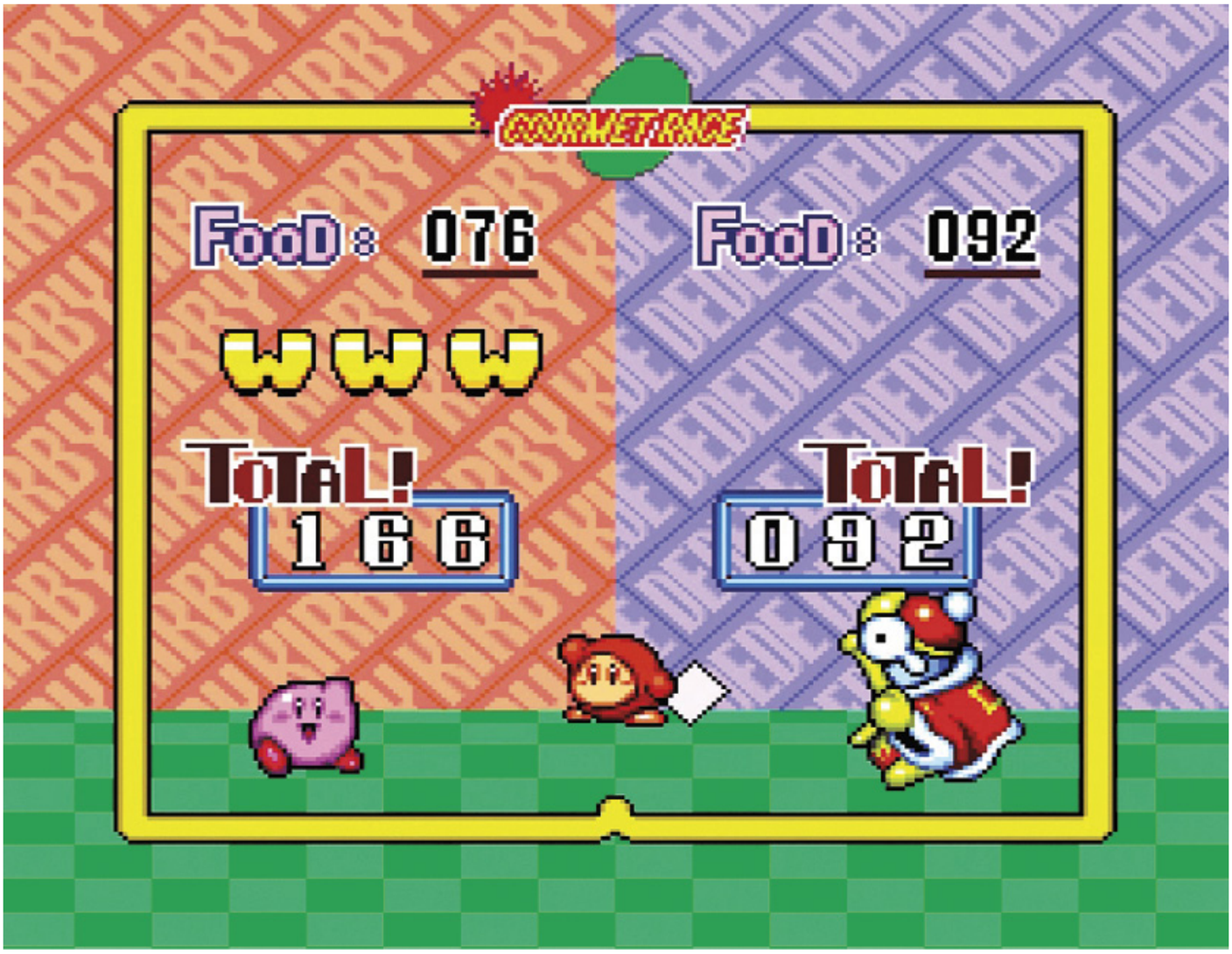






Gourmet Race

Whereas most of *Kirby Super Star*'s games are relatively grandiose excursions, Gourmet Race offers a more light-hearted showdown with Kirby's nemesis, King Dedede. Like all civilized gentlemen, Kirby and Dedede attempt to settle their differences with a footrace across three different courses. Naturally, each stage is filled with spikes, water pits, and other obstacles. Thankfully, Kirby runs much more quickly than normal in this game, but some of his other abilities, like floating and sliding, are slower. Kirby can also grab one of five abilities (Jet, Parasol, Ninja, Wing, or Wheel) to help him through the final course.



Food items are scattered throughout each course, granting Kirby and Dedede one point each when collected. Winning the race grants a bonus 30 points, and the final winner is whoever has the most points at the end of the Grand Prix.

Players can opt to race against a ghost of their best lap times instead of King Dedede. Likewise, each course can also be played on its own as a time trial.

The Great Cave Offensive

We saved the best for fourth! Instead of standalone levels, the Great Cave Offensive mixed a *Metroid*-style non-linear adventure with the *Kirby* formula to great success. Hidden throughout the cave's four areas are 60 treasure chests, each holding a unique item worth various amounts of gold, with a maximum possible score of 9999990. Most of the treasure is hidden behind Blocks or puzzles, and each area has a unique boss. Did we mention there are mine carts?

The Great Cave Offensive features one of the most memorable songs in Kirby history, coupled with nods to numerous other Nintendo games. Treasures found in the Great Cave Offensive include Gold Coin and Turtle Shell (*Super Mario Bros.*), Mr. Saturn (*EarthBound*), Screw Attack (*Metroid*), and Triforce (*The Legend of Zelda*), among others.

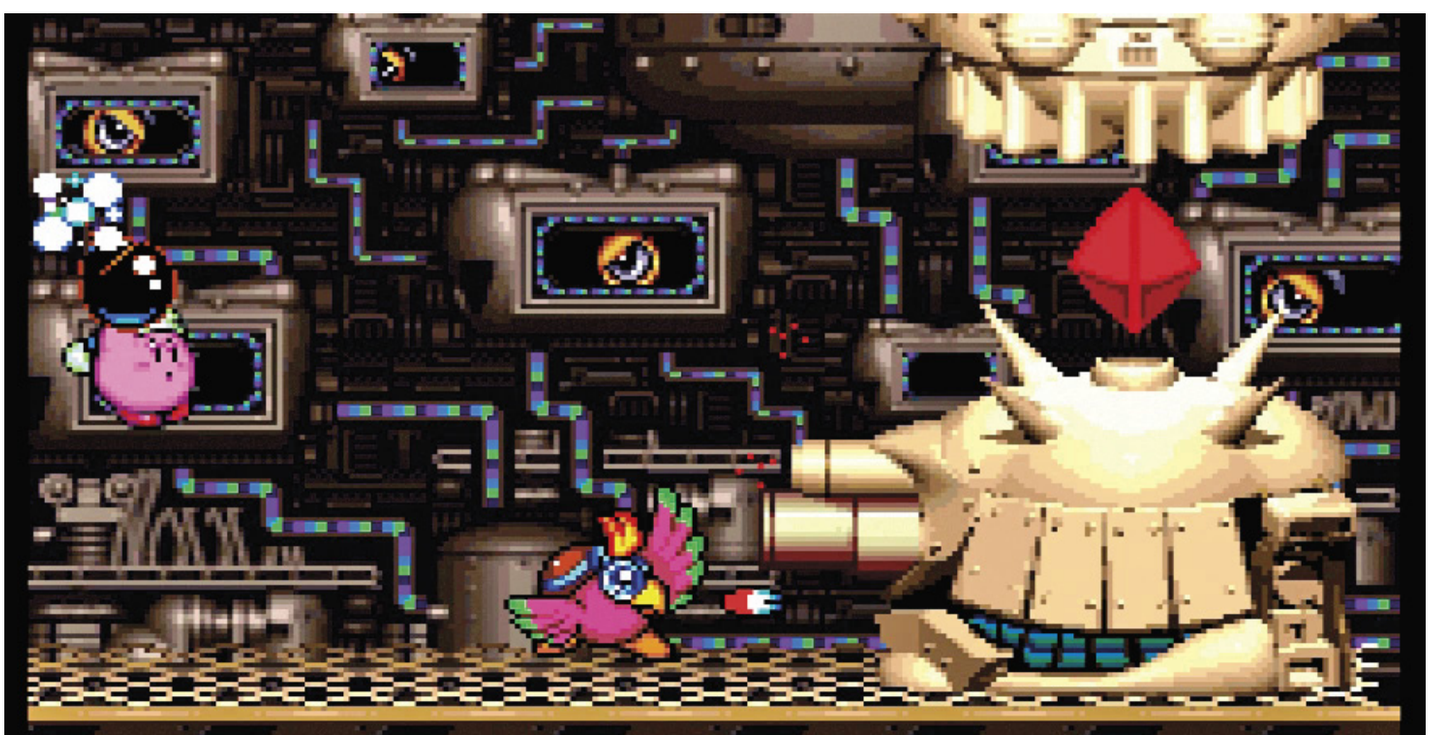
One of the four bosses, Computer Virus, plays out as a quasi-turn-based battle similar to those found in many role-playing games. The bizarre entity even narrates the action, and this is the sole method of measuring the power of each Copy Ability. For instance, Hammer deals 80 points of damage, while Crash deals twice that. When Computer Virus is defeated, Kirby gains various RPG-style stat increases, such as Humor, Honesty, and Love points. These don't actually do anything, however.

TOTAL
1729790G
29: Truth Mirror
500000G
FINAL FANTASY
OFFENSIVE

MESSAGE
You earned 3
Happy Smile points!
LIFE
EN
SWORD
KIRBY
×03

Revenge of Meta Knight

Meta Knight's on a mission to conquer Dream Land and Kirby plans to destroy his airship, the *Halberd*. However, each time Kirby attempts to board the *Halberd*, he is blown off or shot down, sending the player through a series of brief platforming stages. Finally, with the help of none other than Dyna Blade, Kirby is able to board the *Halberd*, destroy the ship's canon and reactor, and confront Meta Knight in a duel. Upon victory, Kirby uses the Wheelie ability to escape while being chased by Meta Knight, who stays behind as the ship crashes into the sea.

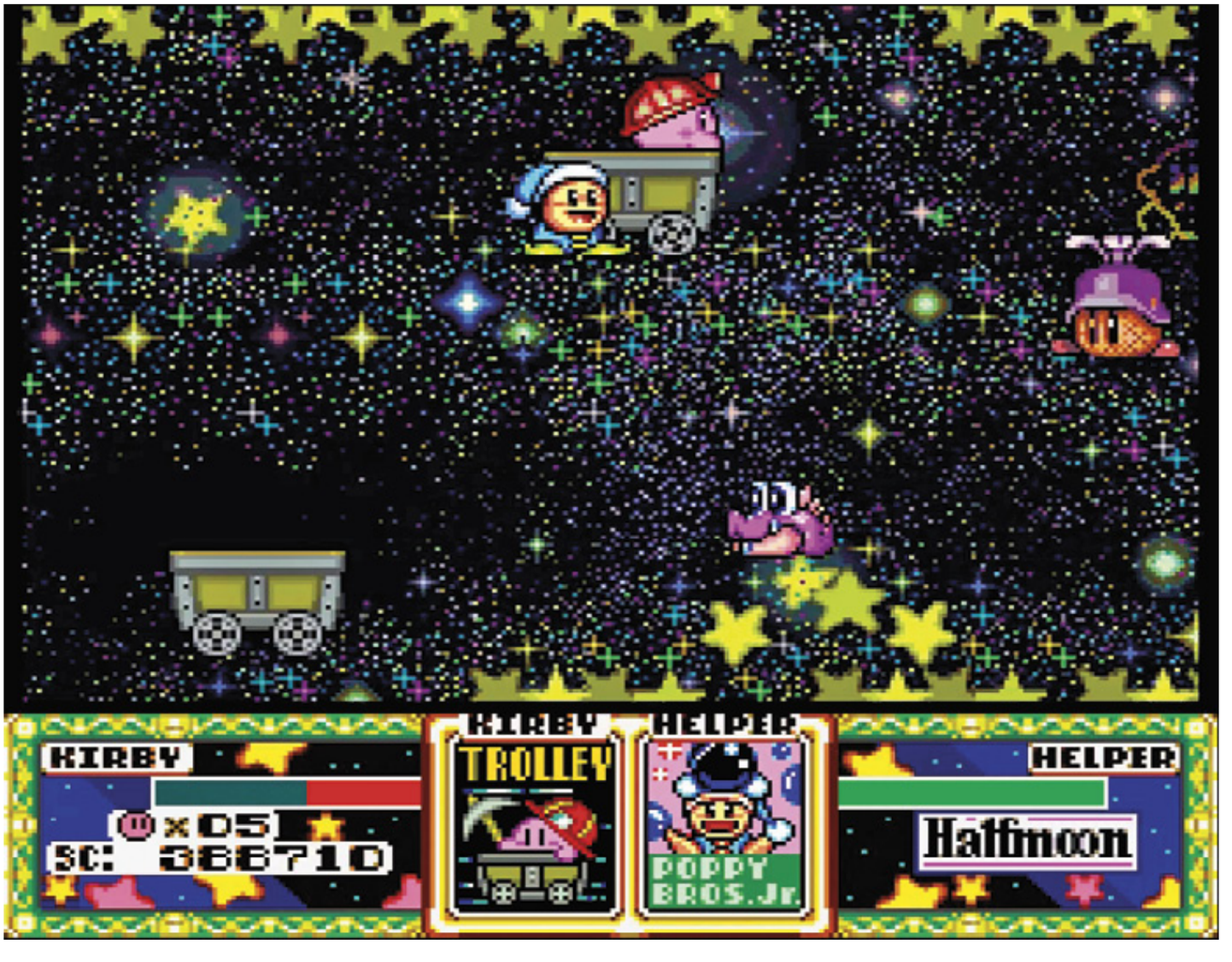


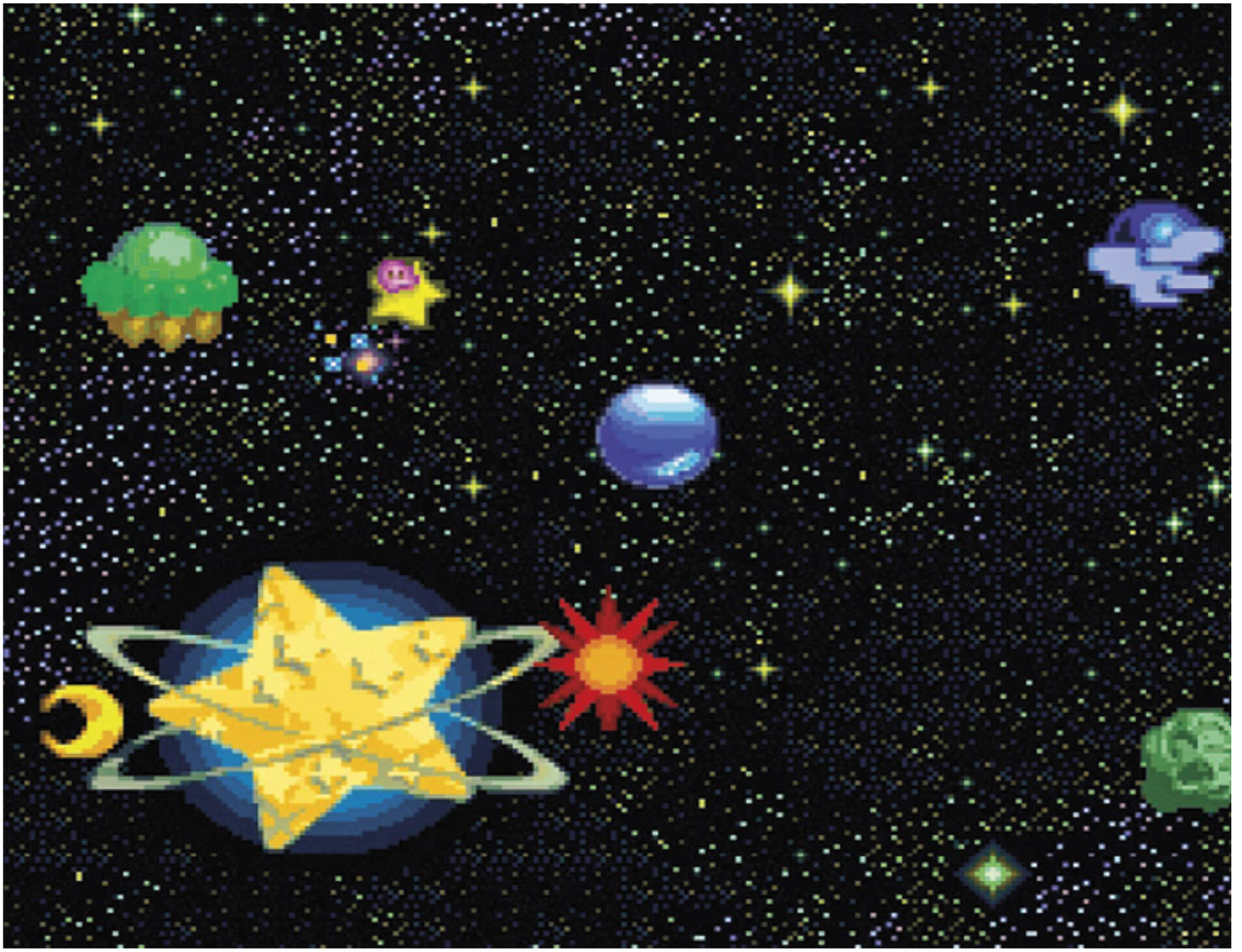
Although Revenge of Meta Knight plays very much like the rest of *Kirby Super Star*, it is particularly unique for a couple of reasons. First, stages are timed—one of the only such instances in the entire *Kirby* franchise. If time runs out, Kirby loses a life. Second, this game has a notable amount of dialogue from Meta Knight and the crew of the *Halberd*,providing plenty of color commentary on Kirby's exploits.

Milky Way Wishes

Milky Way Wishes is not only the largest game in *Kirby Super Star*, but also throws an interesting curveball into the mix. In this game only, Kirby cannot copy abilities by swallowing enemies. Instead, throughout the game's nine different planets are collectibles called Deluxe Copy Abilities, each of which permanently unlocks its associated ability as part of Kirby's arsenal. Unlocked abilities can be selected at any time, allowing players to choose the right tool for any given situation.

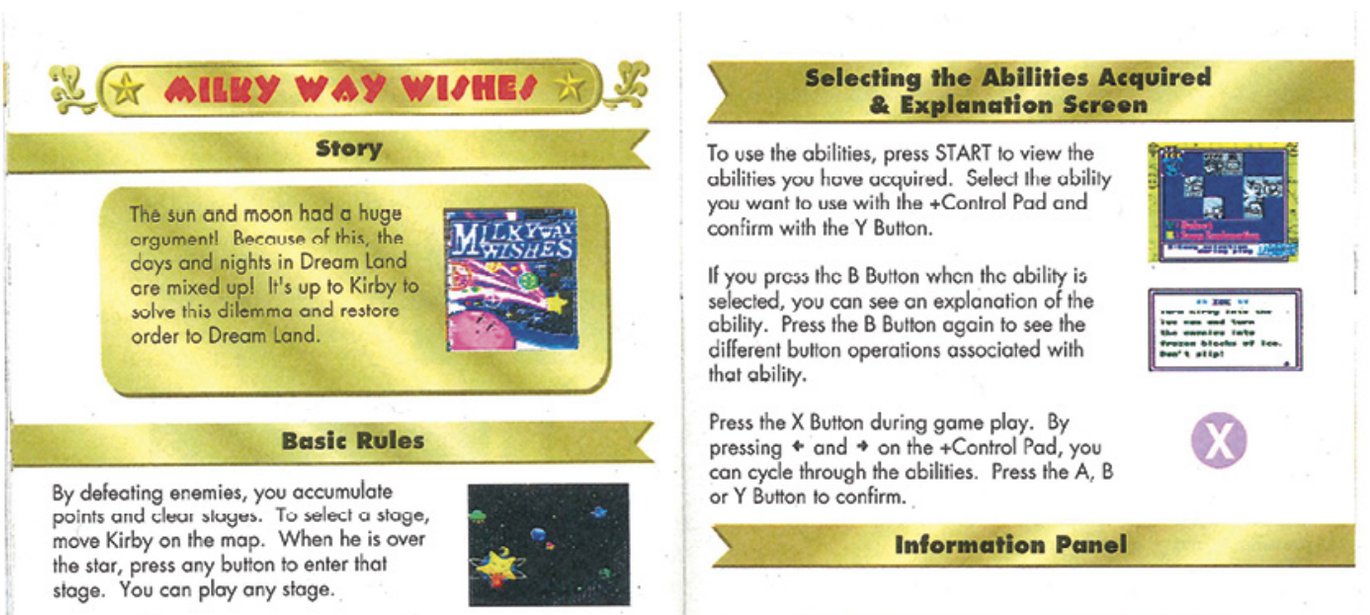
KIRBY
HELPER
KIRBY
×05
SC: 366710
WING
POPPY BROS.Jr.
HELPER
Halfmoon

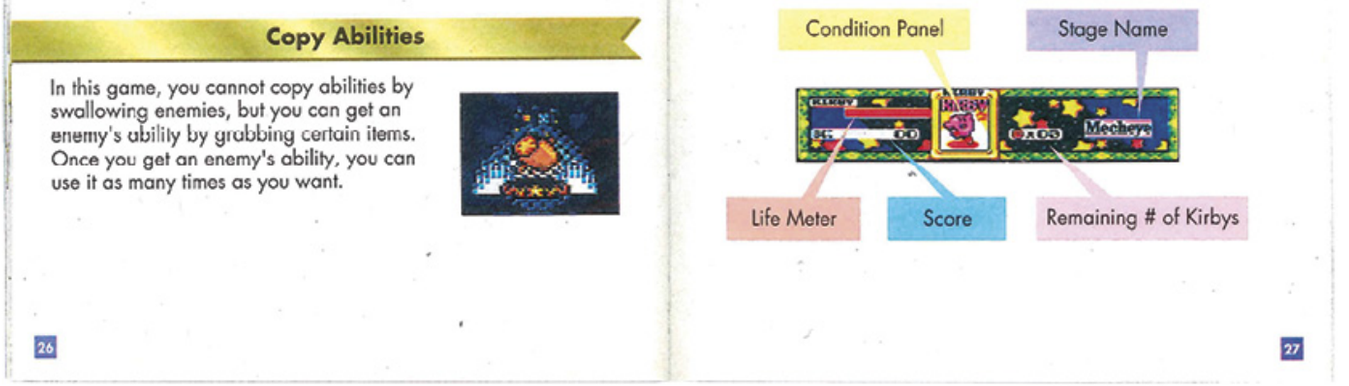

KIRBY
HELPER
KIRBY
×05
SC: 366710
TROLLEY
POPPY BROS.Jr.
HELPER
Halfmoon



Like Revenge of Meta Knight, Milky Way Wishes has a detailed plot. The Sun and Moon are quarreling, so Kirby—at the behest of a small ball-riding jester named Marx—gathers star power from the planets around Popstar, Kirby's home planet. Gathering enough star power allows him to summon a giant comet named Nova, who grants a single wish. However, Marx betrays Kirby and uses the wish to become a giant monster and send Nova on a collision course with Popstar.

The Sun and Moon aid Kirby in entering the comet. Gameplay takes the form of a side-scrolling shooter, where Kirby must destroy Nova's heart before facing the transformed Marx. Defeating both Nova and Marx results in a massive explosion. The Sun and Moon then happily circle Planet Popstar a few times at roughly 12.5 trillion miles per hour before going their separate ways. No big deal, though—just another day in the life of Kirby.





The Arena

The Arena opens once all other games have been completed. Here, Kirby must defeat all 26 *Kirby Super Star* bosses spread across 19 rounds. Losing even once ends Kirby's run as a galactic gladiator. Between rounds, five Maxim Tomatoes help restore Kirby's health, but they don't replenish after being eaten. There are also two random Copy Ability pedestals, and Kirby can choose a specific ability at the start of the game.

Megaton Punch

The second mini-game also revolves around proper timing, but with three steps instead of one. Kirby faces off against three challengers—Waddle Dee, Knuckle Joe, and Iron Mam—in an attempt to demonstrate the strongest punch possible. Each punch cracks the planet, and a perfect punch of 201 Megatons will crack the planet in half. Don't try that at home!

THE SUB GAMES

You can play two different sub games, "Megaton Punch" and "Samurai Kirby." Both games can be played with one or two players.

MEGATON PUNCH

Game Rules

On the screen shown at the right, select one or two players, and confirm by pressing either the A or Y Button.

Next, select the difficulty level by pressing ← and → on the +Control Pad. Three different levels can be selected. Press either the A or Y Button to confirm. For two-player games, set the number of matches by pressing ← and → on the +Control Pad.

The strength of your punch is determined by the power meter, target and timing.

First, set Kirby's power. When the power meter is at its maximum, press any button.

Then, select the target to hit. When the two spinning cursors meet together, press any button.

Finally, select the timing. When the swinging pendulum crosses the ring, press any button.

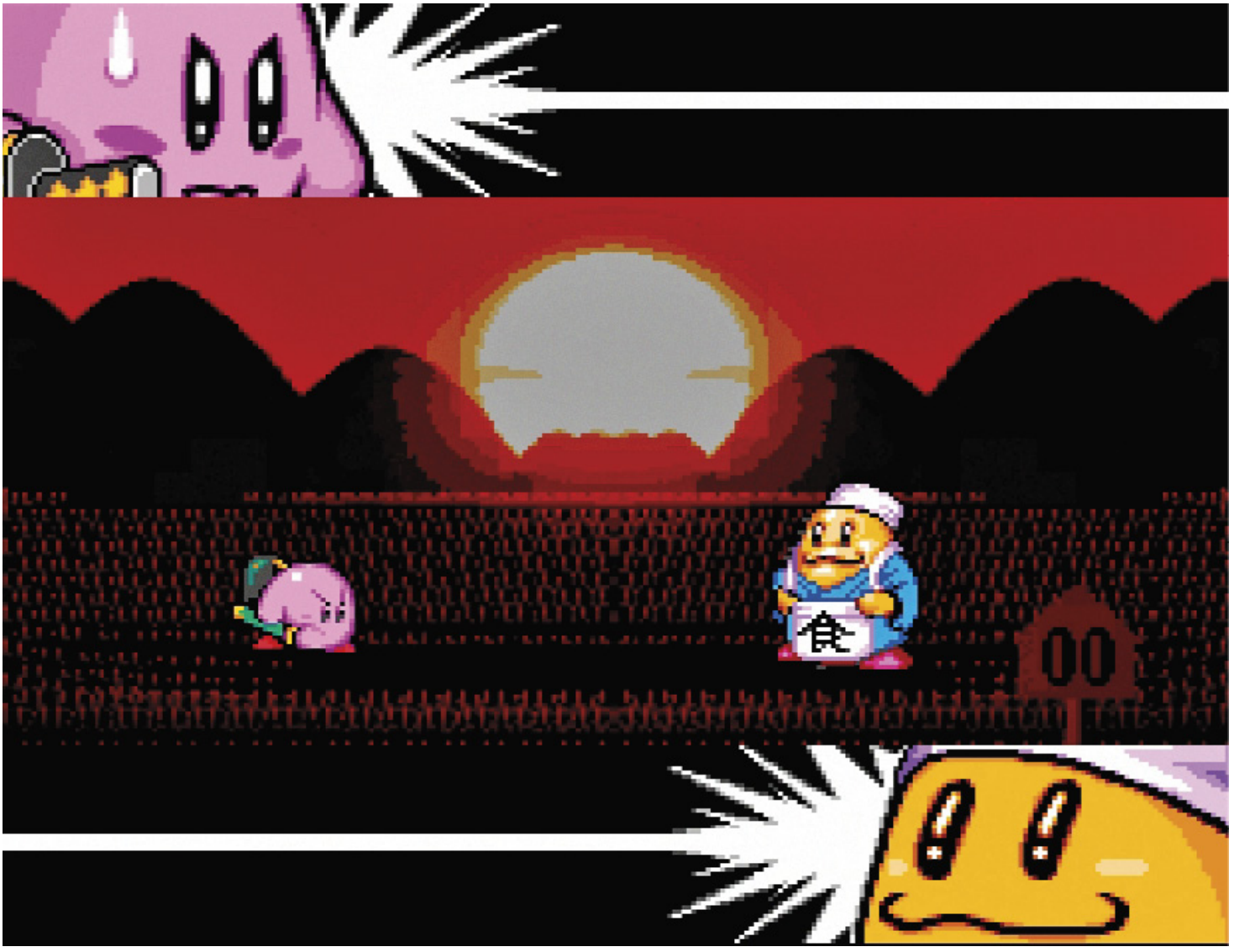
When Kirby breaks the block, the hitting power of the two opponents will be displayed. The character with the higher number is the winner

Victory is decided by three matches. If your megaton power is less than your opponent's, the game is over.

For a 2-Player game, the player with the most wins within the set number of matches is the winner.

Samurai Kirby

Inspired by the cowboy-themed Quick Draw mini-game from *Kirby's Adventure*, Samurai Kirby is all about fast reflexes. Honor, however, takes a backseat, as Kirby fights his various foes—Wheelie, King Dedede, and Meta Knight among them—with different weapons, including a pie, toy hammer, and a party popper. Should Kirby's opposition be faster, they'll return in kind, hitting Kirby over the head with a frying pan or even running him over!



The Super Famicom version of *Kirby Super Star* has more grass in the foreground, but it was removed for international versions to make the subtitles legible.

Unlocking the Features

UNLOCKABLE	HOW TO UNLOCK
Arena	Beat all previous stages
Milky Way Wishes	Beat the Great Cave Offensive and Revenge of Meta-Knight
Revenge of Meta Knight	Beat Dyna Blade
Sound Test	Beat the Arena

1 SUPER FAMICOM

Kirby Super Star's Japanese box art features Kirby burnt into wood, a cool but decidedly less cutesy take on the pink puff's usual marketing materials.

2 PAL

In Europe, *Kirby Super Star* was called *Kirby's Fun Pak*, with "pak" being Nintendo's official name for game cartridges. When the game was released for the Wii U eShop in Europe, it was under the North American *Super Star* moniker.

3 SKYWRITING

In the introduction to the game, a star is seen skywriting Kirby's name. This was removed from the remake, *Kirby Super Star Ultra*, where it instead appears in that game's collection of "Original Kirby Movies."

4 MARIO AND SAMUS STATUES

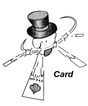
When using the Stone ability, there's a random chance that Kirby or his Helper will become a statue of Samus or Mario.

5 RIGHT BACK AT YA!

Kirby: Right Back at Ya! was a 100-episode anime series that ran initially from 2001 to 2003 in Japan, and 2002 to 2008 in the US. The show was filled with pop-culture references and satire. The creators remarked that it was quite difficult to make a show that revolved around a character that didn't speak, though Kirby did often communicate with nonsensical words and sounds that were somehow understood by those around him.

Flower

Mantle


Card

6 CONCEPT HATS

The twentieth-anniversary compilation, *Kirby's Dream Collection*, included concept art for several scrapped Copy Abilities. Card, which would have given Kirby a magician's top hat and the ability to throw cards, was similar to the Magic ability featured in *Kirby: Squeak Squad*.

7 WING RUSH

Also in *Kirby's Dream Collection*, Wing Kirby's design is shown to be more in line with what eventually became Cupid Kirby, and the Fighter ability's original name was revealed to be "Rush."

8 FOOD!

Kirby loves food, but the items he can eat were changed between the Japanese and international versions of *Kirby Super Star*.

9 CROWDED CAMEO

Mario, Luigi, Toad, Princess Toadstool, Birdo, and Bowser appear in the crowd during the Megaton Punch mini-game. The crowd is mirrored so they actually appear twice, once on each side. The same crowd is used again for the boss fight with King Dedede, where they can be seen at the sides of the ring.

10 SUPER SMASH KIRBY

Original Kirby designer Masahiro Sakurai would eventually go on to lead development on the *Super Smash Bros.* series. Naturally, the pink puff's prowess as a pugilist made Kirby an obvious choice for inclusion.

Music and stages from the Kirby series appeared in each *Smash Bros.* title as well, including Meta Knight's *Halberd* airship, Whispy Woods, and a massive stage modeled after the four areas of the Great Cave Offensive, complete with treasure chests and mine carts!

11 NES PROTOTYPE

Kirby Super Star was originally prototyped on the NES, despite always being intended as a Super NES game. The simplistic nature of Nintendo's older system and the existing assets from *Kirby's Adventure* allowed the team to test and finalize ideas more rapidly.

12 KIRBY SUPERSTAR SAGA

In *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga*, an advertisement for a *Kirby Super Star* movie is seen when visiting Yoshi Theater. Kirby sure gets around!

13 ULTRA HELPERS

Helpers don't change much between *Kirby Super Star* and its remake, *Kirby Super Star Ultra*—except for Capsule J, who is replaced by Capsule J2, and Sword Knight, who appears in the new Meta Knightmare game. Certain Helpers were also given additional color variations for the Hero to Helpers game.

14 YOU'RE TURNING KIRBY, VIOLET!

The commercial for *Kirby Super Star* showed a child being hospitalized with TMK (Too Much Kirby). Symptoms included turning pink and round. To the juicing room with him!

15 MECHEYE

Certain Milky Way Wishes planets originally had slightly different names: Aquarius was called Aqualiss, and Mekkai was spelled Mecheye. These later appeared in the Japanese version of *Kirby Super Star Ultra*.

16 NINTENDO CINEMATIC UNIVERSE?

In the 2016 animated short, *Star Fox Zero: The Battle Begins*, Slippy Toad can be seen "reading" a magazine featuring the names of several planets from Milky Way Wishes. Nintendo cinematic universe confirmed?

Video is restricted

Speedrunner Stupca

World Records Held: Any% (35M 30S)

Speedrunning hopefuls should get very familiar with Jet. This single Copy Ability allows players to blast through or outright circumvent entire sections of the game, including bosses! There are two categories of runs, 100% and Any%, though both exclude the Megaton Punch and Samurai Kirby mini-games. To illustrate the difference between the two categories, every treasure in The Great Cave Offensive can be collected in roughly 22 minutes for 100%, or that game can simply be beat in under five minutes for Any%.

Kirby Super Star world record holder Stupca started running the game in July of 2015. "I was looking for a game similar to Mega Man X that wasn't part of the X series but still had a dash-like mechanic. I saw [another speedrunner] using the Jet ability to dash around the game in a lot of cool ways. Immediately I wanted to try it myself!" Stupca started practicing by watching the top runs at the time and trying to mimic them, using online tutorials to figure out tricky mechanics. When there was no tutorial, he would reach out to his fellow *Super Star* runners for help. Now he's at the top of the leaderboards, doling out his expertise to future Kirby Super Stars!

Basic

Jet Movement

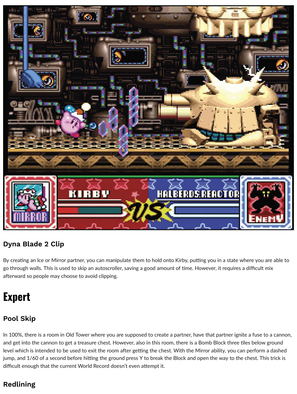
Maneuvering with and keeping Jet is tricky. In *Kirby Super Star*, anything that is not open air can completely ruin a player. Anytime a wall is hit with Jet, Kirby recoils and is unable to move for a period of time, and the positioning of the room is thrown off, which can lead to more mistakes later on. Enemies have a chance to knock your ability out every time they hit you, and sometimes they can knock your ability into an unrecoverable location, which loses a lot of time.

Miniboss Skipping

Each miniboss in the game is contained inside an invisible box, which, upon entrance, spawns the minibosss and locks the screen to the box until the boss is defeated. This box only reaches as far as what you can see on screen, so by going above and past the boo, you can avoid a miniboss entirely. In speedruns, this is done in most places by fully charging Jet, dashing, then jumping to go above the screen. Then, with correctly timed Y presses to perform a Jet string above the screen, the miniboss is skipped.

Miniboss Quick Killing

There are some minibosses in the game whose boo you cannot avoid, so for these bosses, you perform a one-shot quick kill. Each miniboss which cannot be skipped has a weak point at the very bottom of their hitbox. These minibosses spawn in the air, so with a well-timed partner jump or full Jet charge jump, you can kill them immediately as they spawn.



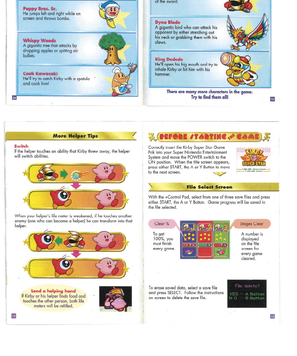
Death Wheel

With the Wheel ability, if you start rolling then hold B until you hit a wall, Kirby stops but is still in a wheel state. Releasing B at this point creates the "death wheel," an invincible wheel which damages anything upon contact. The death wheel is used in Milky Way Wishes against Heavy Lobster, and by most people against Fatty Whale.

Advanced

Mixing

In this game, there are many different Copy Abilities one can get. If you inhale an enemy, you get their ability. However, if you inhale two enemies, what's known as the Mix Roulette starts. The roulette spins so that every ability is available for selection for 1/15 of a second before moving on to the next ability, and so on. There is no randomness involved in this process, as the roulette starts at a specific point depending on the two enemies inhaled. Learning the timings to get desired abilities takes some time, and missing a mix can end a run immediately at the highest level of play.



Dyna Blade 2 Clip

By creating an Ice or Mirror partner, you can manipulate them to hold onto Kirby, putting you in a state where you are able to go through walls. This is used to skip an autoscroller, saving a good amount of time. However, it requires a difficult mix afterward so people may choose to avoid clipping.

Expert

Pool Skip

In 100%, there is a room in Old Tower where you are supposed to create a partner, have that partner ignite a fuse to a cannon, and get into the cannon to get a treasure chest. However, also in this room, there is a Bomb Block three tiles below ground level which is intended to be used to exit the room after getting the chest. With the Mirror ability, you can perform a dashed jump, and 1/60 of a second before hitting the ground presto Y to break the Block and open the way to the chest. This trick is difficult enough that the current World Record doesn't even attempt it.

Redlining

The definition of "redlining" is to go faster than the game engine can handle, which I think is a perfect definition for this Jet technique. To redline, you must line yourself horizontally with a surface, and tap Y to get a short, quick jet out. This short movement normally wouldn't go far, however, if you are lined up correctly, you can jump as you touch the surface and transfer the speed to the jump. This is very valuable because while you are jumping, you can still charge Jet, allowing you to get a max charge and speed through the stage. This is a relatively new technique, and currently I am the only person I know of who uses it.

Kirby's Dream Land 3

1997, Super NES

The final first-party Super NES game released and the first of the *Dream Land* saga to be released on a home console, *Kirby's Dream Land 3* introduced what would become a recurring theme in later titles: the use of specific arts and crafts as a visual style. Namely, *Dream Land 3*'s visuals evoked a pastel pastiche seemingly drawn from crayons. Despite this softer aesthetic, *Kirby's Dream Land 3* is also known for one of the franchise's most graphic boss battles. The final boss, Zero (or 0), is a giant floating sphere that shoots projectile blood emitted from slits in its body. The eye eventually detaches from the sphere to a fairly gory effect and, once defeated, explodes in a similarly gory manner.

To date, *Kirby's Dream Land 3* is also the last *Kirby* title where Kirby's animal friends appeared in non-cameo roles. First introduced in *Kirby's Dream Land 2*, different animal friends can be ridden by Kirby, and he can grant them unique capabilities when paired with Copy Abilities.

Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards

2000, Nintendo 64

After making his Nintendo 64 debut in *Super Smash Bros.*, Kirby got his own 64-bit title. Unlike *Super Mario 64*, *Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards* maintained the series' 2D roots, albeit with 3D graphics. Of particular note, *Kirby 64* introduced the mechanic of combining Copy Abilities to create new ones. For example, combining the Stone and Burning abilities generates the Volcano ability.

Kirby 64 also replaced Kirby's signature victory dance with the character turning to the camera, waving, and saying hello.

Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land

2002, Game Boy Advance

Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land was a portable remake of *Kirby's Adventure*. Key changes included a reduction in overall difficulty, four-player support, and hats for most Copy Abilities, which the original did not feature, as it was released prior to *Kirby Super Star*.

Kirby & the Amazing Mirror

2004, Game Boy Advance

Kirby's final appearance on the Game Boy Advance, *Kirby & the Amazing Mirror*, greatly expanded upon *Nightmare in Dream Land*'s multiplayer support, allowing the player to call up to three other player- or CPU-controlled Kirbys to his aid with an in-game cell phone (Kirby's so stylish!). Certain portions of the game required multiple Kirbys to work together in a manner similar to *The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*. While the gameplay was otherwise classic Kirby, the layouts of the stages were open-ended, as originally seen in the Great Cave Offensive. *The Amazing Mirror* added a few new Copy Abilities, including Cupid, Missile, and Smash, the last of which allows Kirby to play more like his *Super Smash Bros.* counterpart. *Super Smash Bros.*'s disembodied gloved bosses, Master Hand and Crazy Hand, make a rare cameo appearance as bosses in *The Amazing Mirror* and the primary source of the Smash Copy Ability.

Kirby & the Amazing Mirror marked series creator Masahiro Sakurai's last contribution to the *Kirby* franchise (as Special Advisor).

Kirby: Squeak Squad

2006, Nintendo DS

Known as *Kirby Mouse Attack* in PAL territories, *Kirby: Squeak Squad* pits Kirby against a band of treasure-stealing mice known as Squeaks. *Kirby: Squeak Squad* put an emphasis on environment interaction, such as burning away obstacles or freezing a body of water to use for traversal. New Copy Abilities included Animal—one of the original ability concepts scrapped for *Kirby's Adventure*—along with Bubble, Ghost, and Metal. Using a system similar to the Deluxe Copy Abilities from *Kirby Super Star*'s Milky Way Wishes game, Kirby can store abilities and access them at any time in the Copy Palette. Abilities in the Copy Palette can be combined via "Mix," a mechanic similar to that seen in *Kirby 64*.

Kirby Super Star Ultra

2008, Nintendo DS

Twelve years after its release, *Kirby Super Star* was remade for the Nintendo DS. *Kirby Super Star Ultra* features all of the original game's content, but with added functionality, such as the ability to play certain mini-games like Gourmet Race with two players.

Several new games were added, essentially doubling the already robust compilation's content: Meta Knightmare Ultra replaces Kirby with Meta Knight as the playable character in games like Spring Breeze, Dyna Blade, the Great Cave Offensive, Milky Way Wishes, and even Revenge of Meta Knight! Helper to Hero allows the player to play as any Helper in the game in a boss rush Endurance Mode. Revenge of the King is an enhanced version of Spring Breeze, which itself was an enhanced version of *Kirby's Dream Land*.

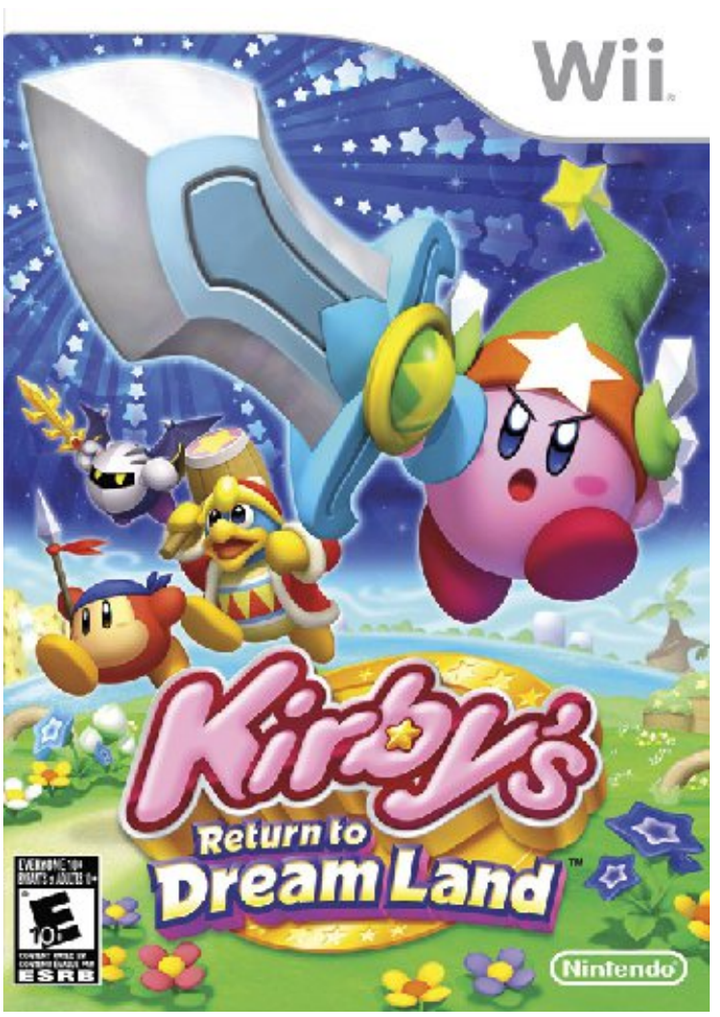
Other enhancements include improved visuals, CG cinematics for each game, new mini-games, and even a blooper reel that is unlocked by completing the new True Arena game.

Kirby's Epic Yarn

2010, Wii

Kirby's Epic Yarn takes its unique visual cues from a Japanese commercial for *Kirby's Adventure* from over a decade and a half prior. Following the arts-and-crafts approach seen in other titles like *Kirby's Dream Land 3* and *Kirby Canvas Curse*, characters and environments in *Kirby's Epic Yarn* are composed of beads, buttons, patchwork materials, and, of course, copious amounts of yarn. This extends to Kirby himself, cursed by a magic sorcerer, whose stringy yarn-like body can no longer inhale anything. This causes a drastic shift in the usual Kirby platforming routine, as Kirby must instead manipulate the world by pulling at threads and zippers or transforming himself.

The thematic mechanics, imaginative visual style, and easy-going yet rewarding gameplay have made *Kirby's Epic Yarn* one of the more memorable and beloved entries in the entire franchise.



Kirby's Return to Dream Land

2011, Wii

The enemies in Dream Land must be particularly tasty, as Kirby can't seem to get enough of this place! Kirby's first outing for the Wii provides the most visually stunning 3D rendition of Dream Land yet seen, while retaining the colorful and cartoony art style from classic titles.

A handful of Copy Abilities received powerful "Super Ability" versions, such as Ultra Sword. Up to three other players can join the adventure at any time, and players can select among Meta Knight, King Dedede, Bandana Waddle Dee (who debuted in *Kirby Super Star*'s Megaton Punch mini-game), and different-colored Kirbys. The Kirbys are the only characters that can use Copy Abilities, while the other playable characters have their own movesets.

Kirby's Return to Dream Land—or some variation of—was in development for roughly 11 years. During that time the development team attempted to create three different Kirby games, starting with a four-player 3D title for the GameCube. This game was shown off publicly at the Electronic Entertainment Expo before being quietly canceled. The second title would have been a free-roaming 3D adventure game similar to *Super Mario 64*—a first for the *Kirby* franchise. Producer Shigefumi Kawase explained that the game never achieved the standard of quality they were aiming for, and so it too was scrapped. The third game was a more traditional 2D platformer with a visual style modeled after a pop-up book.

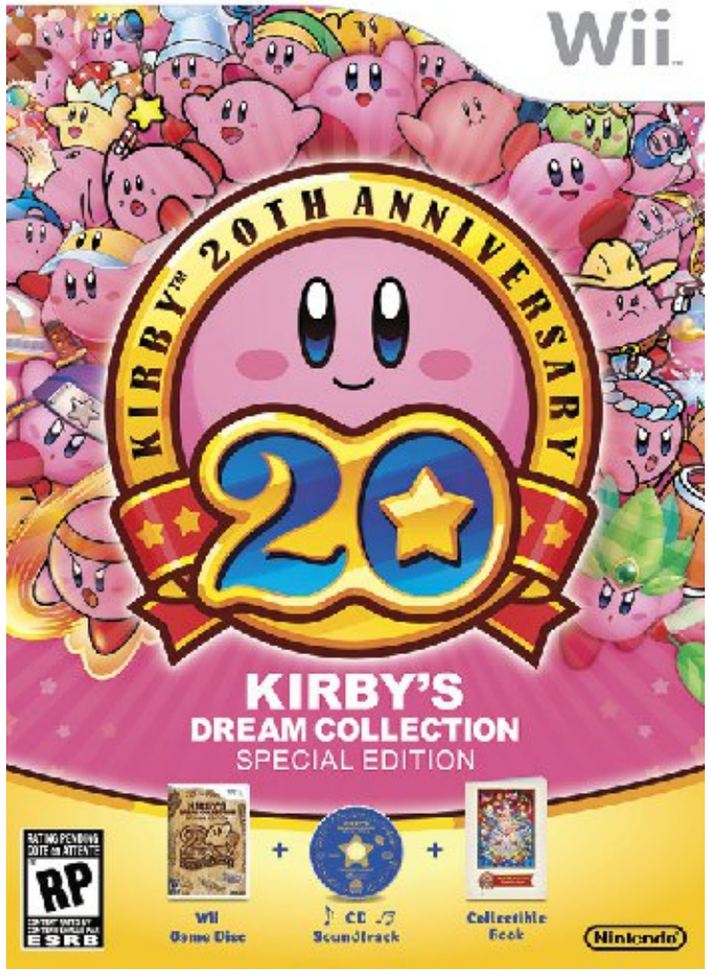
Eventually, *Kirby's Return to Dream Land* incorporated elements of all three canceled games. Critical reception was positive and the game sold over 1.5M copies worldwide.

Kirby Mass Attack

2011, Nintendo DS

What's better than one Kirby? How about 10! In *Kirby Mass Attack*, up to 10 Kirbys can be controlled by the player at once, using the DS's stylus and touchscreen. The gaggle of Kirbys follow the "heroic heart" around the screen, navigating obstacles and attacking enemies in a *Pikmin*-like mob. Because there is rarely room for all 10 Kirbys to stand apart, they often adorably crawl and stand on top of each other.

Kirbys can be damaged and eventually even die, floating away as little Kirby angels. However, eating fruit sends in reinforcements until the full complement of Kirbys is reached.

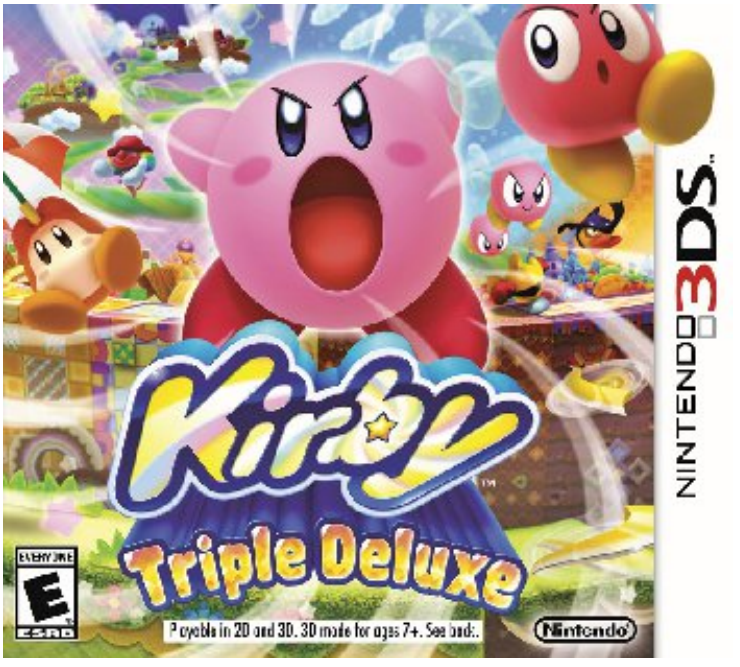


Kirby's Dream Collection: Special Edition

2012, Wii

Kirby's Dream Collection was a compilation game commemorating the character's twentieth anniversary. Kudos to Kirby for eating anything he wants and still looking as good as he did 20 years prior!

The six classic titles included on the special-edition disc are *Kirby's Adventure*, *Kirby Super Star*, *Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards*, and *Kirby's Dream Land 1*, *2*, and *3*, alongside a few new Challenge mini-games. The Kirby's History Mode provides a retrospective on the entire series, as do the soundtrack CD and 48-page book included in the package, revealing many previously undisclosed tidbits and concept art from Kirby's past.



Kirby: Triple Deluxe

2014, Nintendo 3DS

Kirby: Triple Deluxe starts where Milky Way Wishes from *Kirby Super Star* ends. Another 2.5D platformer, *Kirby: Triple Deluxe* utilizes the 3DS's unique visual capabilities by allowing Kirby to switch between 2D paths in the background and foreground via a 3D Warp Star. Upon completion, the entire game can be replayed as King Dedede.

Two mini-games from *Kirby: Triple Deluxe* were released as standalone downloadable titles for the Nintendo eShop: *Dedede's Drum Dash Deluxe* and *Kirby Fighters Deluxe*.

Kirby and the Rainbow Curse

2015, Wii U

Kirby and the Rainbow Curse combines solid four-player gameplay, a clay-inspired motif, and the rainbow rope mechanic seen in its predecessor, *Kirby: Canvas Curse*. This is one of a limited few *Kirby* games not to feature Copy Abilities, though Kirby and his companion Waddle Dee can use their paintbrushes or transformations in combat.

The game was known as *Kirby and the Rainbow Paintbrush* in PAL regions.

Kirby: Planet Robobot

2016, Nintendo 3DS

Kirby: Planet Robobot is largely similar to *Kirby: Triple Deluxe*, albeit with the introduction of a controllable mech called Robobot Armor. The Robobot Armor can change "Modes" by absorbing Copy Abilities from enemies, giving it a variety of new appearances and powers.

Certain unlockables are available primarily via Kirby-themed amiibo, such as the Smash Bros. and UFO Copy Abilities, as well as alternate appearances for the Hammer, Sword, and Parasol abilities.

As with *Kirby: Triple Deluxe*, two mini-games from *Kirby: Planet Robobot* were also released as standalone downloadable titles: *Team Kirby Clash Deluxe* and *Kirby's Blowout Blast*.

Kirby Super Star

Kirby Super Star Credits

Director

Masahiro Sakurai

Programmers

Tetsuya Abe

Junichi Aoyagi

Masakazu Ebihara

Teruyuki Gunji

Isao Takahashi

Akio Hanyu

Chief Programmer

Shigenobu Kasai

Designers

Kazu Ozawa

Hiroo Takeshita

Tetsuya Mochizuki

CG Designers

Hitoshi Kikkawa

Tatsuhiro Tanoue

Shigeru Hashiguchi

Tadashi Hashikura

Chief Designer

Tsuyoshi Wakayama

Sound Composers

Jun Ishikawa

Dan Miyakawa

Mappers

Shinichi Shimomura

Tomomi Minami

Special Thanks

Hiroaki Suga

Tetsuo Kujiraoka

Hidetoshi Seki

Yoshiaki Shinohara

Shigeru Hirayama

Seiji Otoguro

Atsushi Kakuta

Takashi Saito

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Kayomi McDonald

Adviser

Kensuke Tanabe

Takao Shimizu

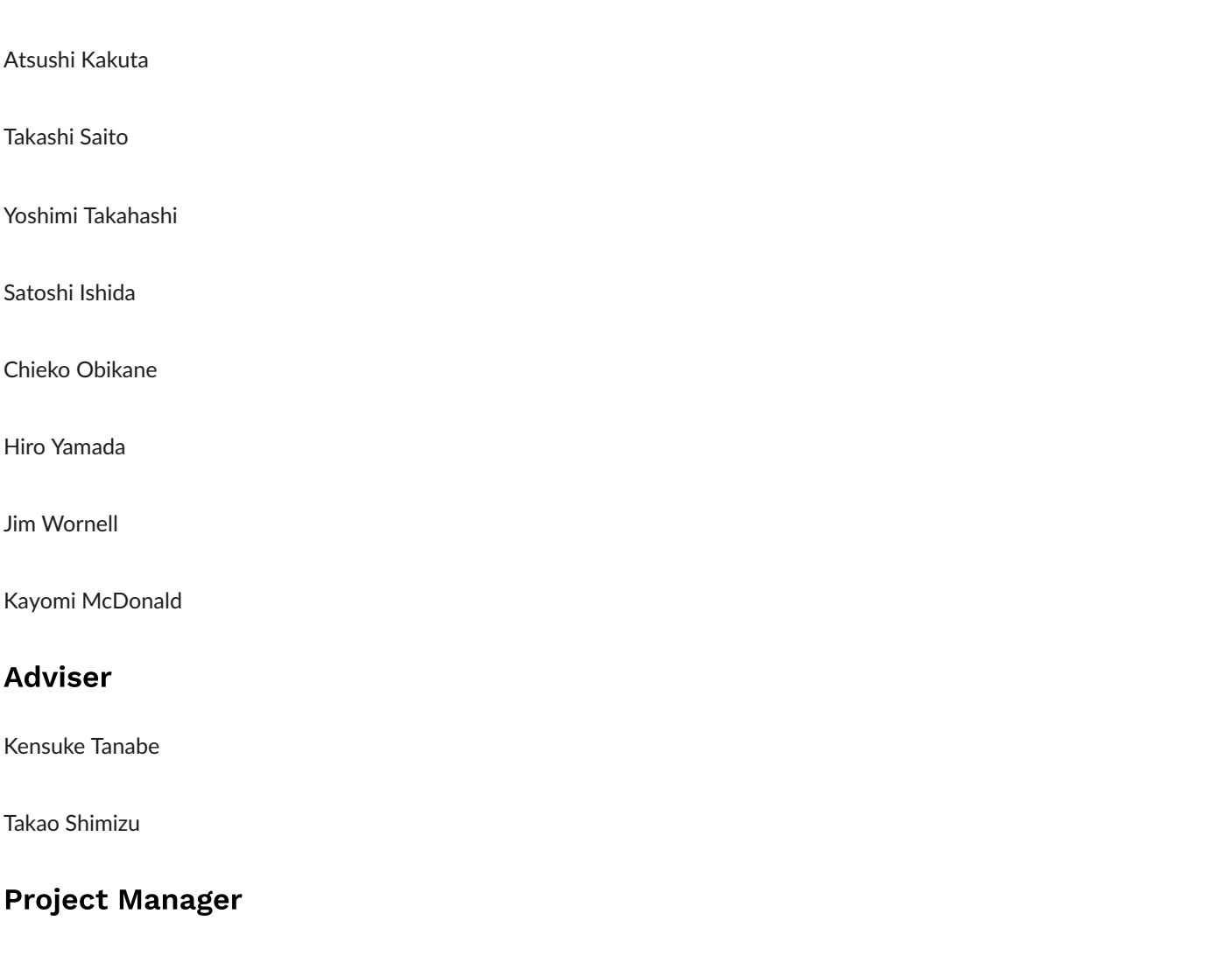
Project Manager

Ryuki Kuraoka

Producer

Satoru Iwata

Shigeru Miyamoto

Executive Producer

Hiroshi Yamauchi